# The role of the liturgy in the process of union in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

**By**

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Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS (PRACTICAL THEOLOGY)

In the Faculty of Theology

**UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA**

**SUPERVISOR: Prof C.J. Wepener**

**30 September 2014**

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# ABSTRACT

This study is the liturgical research based on the role of liturgy in the process of unification focusing on the union of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. The study will look into the cultural questions that are at play and critically evaluate the liturgy that is currently being used in the UPCSA. Does it enhance unity? The study will address the question, "What would the Worship Service Book look like in order to enhance unity in the UPCSA?"  If this question is answered in the affirmative, the next question would be, "How can it be improved?" But if the answer to the question is in the negative, "What can be done to improve its content to assist with the process of unification that can be celebrated in liturgy?" "How can this study help the UPCSA in the process of *'liturgia condenda'* develop a theory for praxis which will serve the unification process rather than hinder it? Finally, this study will then present recommendations for the UPCSA to develop or take alternative action.

# KEY TERMS

1. **Liturgy**

2. **Ritual**

3. **Inculturation**

4. **Unity**

5. **Worship**

6. **Union**

7. **Tradition**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It would not have been possible for me to write this research work without the help and support of the kind people around me, to only some of whom it is possible to give particular mention here.

Above all, I would like to thank my wife Tembakazi, daughter Olwethu and son Siphosethu for their unwavering personal support and great patience at all times.

This study would not have been possible without the help, support and patience of my supervisor, Prof. Cas Wepener, not to mention his advice and unsurpassed knowledge of Liturgical Studies.

During the initial stages of this study I received good advice, support and friendship of Dr. Vuyani Vellem, Prof Graham Duncan and Dr. Zwelethemba Mpono. To all of you my brothers I say *nangamso madoda, aMathukela ayabulela.* You have been invaluable on both an academic and a personal level, for which I am extremely grateful.

I would also like to acknowledge the financial, academic and technical support of the University of Pretoria; the library facilities and computer facilities of the University, have been indispensable

Last but not least I would like to acknowledge the tremendous work done by Sandra Duncan for proof reading and editing this work.

**DEDICATION**


*This dissertation is dedicated in loving memory to my late parents;*


*My father*


**Tamsanqa Victor Mshumpela**


*And my mother*


**Vuyelwa Albertina Mshumpela**


They both passed on whilst I was at the core of this study in 2013.


Thank you for every thing


LALANI NGOXOLO BAZALI.

## DECLARATION

I **Lulama Mshumpela**, hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work. It is submitted in fulfilment for the degree of Masters of Arts in (Practical Theology) at the Faculty of Theology, at University of Pretoria, South Africa.

This dissertation has not been submitted before for any degree at any tertiary institution.

I certify that the dissertation is my own work and all references used are accurately reported.

Signed:


_____                                    30 September 2014

**Lulama Mshumpela**                                      **Date**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

**UPCSA**        **:**        **Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa**

**RPCSA**        **:**        **Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa**

**PCSA**        **:**        **Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa**

**ExCom**        **:**        **Executive Commission**

**SCU**        **:**        **Special Commission on Union**

**Chapter 1: Preamble**

**1.1 Background**

The researcher has been a minister of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (UPCSA) for twenty four years – twelve years in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa (RPCSA) and twelve years in the UPCSA. The RPCSA was established in 1923 as the black Bantu Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa, and renamed the RPCSA in 1979. The Presbyterian Church of South Africa (PCSA) on the other hand was established in 1897. It was a white dominated church which was formed by the 'colonial' congregations and presbyteries "which consisted of settlers from Britain who arrived in South Africa in 1820" (Vellem 2007: 45). In September 1999, these two denominations viz. the RPCSA and the PCSA formed a union to establish the UPCSA.

During the first twelve years in ministry, the researcher observed the influence church associations had in liturgical reform and renewal in the RPCSA. Similarly, the researcher noticed how this influence of church associations to transform liturgy gradually eroded in the present dispensation of the UPCSA. This triggered interest in the researcher which led to this study of 'Liturgical transformation in the process of unification in the UPCSA'. The purpose is to investigate how this influence of church associations in transforming liturgy eroded, how it can be restored and how this African heritage can be affirmed in the UPCSA. To achieve this, a brief background of the union and its shortcomings is hereby presented.

Today, more than twelve years after the union was formed, the cultures of the two former denominations that is the RPCSA and PCSA are still clearly visible within the UPCSA. In other words, a complete union has not yet been achieved by the denomination (UPCSA), "Church unity, a Scriptural imperative, is still an elusive ideal, in spite of all the recent attempts to advance the process" (Wepener 2009: 6). This gave rise to the following concerns:

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- The Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA is the Manual of Law and Procedure of the former PCSA (1996), though it gets amended from time to time, making some to be more privileged than others in the union. "The Presbyterian form of Church government is held to be founded upon and agreeable to the Word of God" (Duncan 2004: 5).

At the time of the union, it was agreed that "the form of government of the Uniting Church shall be determined in all matters by a book to be named 'The Manual and Procedure of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa'. In the interim this will be the Manual of Law and Procedure, as amended, of the former PCSA. It will be given a new cover and the title and all references in it to the PCSA will be replaced by references to the Uniting Church. After the union, the General Assembly of the Uniting Church will set up a Manual Committee to draw up the new Manual of Law and Procedure of the Uniting Church" (Basis of Union 1999). This arrangement is seen by many members as being unfair.

Duncan states that the concerned members of the Presbytery of Amatola said; "it requires one group to change, and it leaves the other group in a comfort zone where they are not required to change. The acid test of a loving relationship is the willingness of married partners to change and adjust for the sake of one another, because they love one another" (Duncan 2004: 5).

- Differences in ministers' stipends. This is another issue which breaks the hearts of many ministers in the denomination to such an extent that when they talk about it, they literally cry. In the UPCSA, the level of education and the number of years of ordination are the only things that elevate ministers. However the class difference continues to exist between white and black ministers. This is caused by the fact that the method of paying ministers' stipends suits white ministers who were all ministers of the PCSA prior to the union. The system that was used by the RPCSA which elevated ministers by education and years of ordination was dropped.

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- The immovable properties of the denomination (UPCSA). All the immovable properties in the former RPCSA belonged to the denomination while most of the properties in the former PCSA belonged to the congregations. There was an assumption that when the union happened, all the immovable properties from former denominations would be vested in the trustees of the new Uniting Church (Duncan 2004). This again is seen by many members as being unfair because even if the union doesn't work they will remain stuck in it because if they withdraw, they will lose all they had prior to the union.

- The manner in which church associations are regarded is less important in the denomination by the General Assembly. This is a matter of concern for many members in the denomination, and it is one of the critical challenges seen as a threat to the union because people feel that the leadership is biased in favour of a certain group at the expense of the other group and the unity of the church in general. Former RPCSA associations were all disbanded and new associations of the new denomination (UPCSA) were formed.

However due to some "hidden" reasons most of the members of the former PCSA associations withdrew from the new UPCSA associations and remained in the associations that were not disbanded but were instead given new names. It is asserted that reasons are "hidden" because one view that was given as a reason was addressed but the problem did not go away. Instead people still continue to call for the recognition of the newly named former PCSA church associations within the UPCSA.

In other words, the former PCSA associations are still as intact in the new denomination as they were before the union, whilst all former RPCSA associations were disbanded. In the former RPCSA, though church associations were not at the "ontological level of a church conceptually" (Vellem 2007: 44) but were very influential because they were an integral part of the denomination. Actually they were the pillars of the denomination in every respect, since all ministers, all

commissioners to the General Assembly, the elders and deacons in most congregations and most women and youth were members. The vast majority of members of the denomination were members of associations.

The failure to unite church associations therefore is seen by many members as a deliberate strategy to defuse the immense influence associations possessed in making Christianity and liturgy comprehensive and relevant to the context of the culture of African members of the denomination. By the time of writing this proposal (May 2012), there was no commitment on the part of the leadership of the denomination to resolve this problem, except to say that people were becoming impatient and informally raising their wishes that the July 2012 General Assembly meeting should be a make or break regarding this state of affairs.

The truth is that, the union has changed the paradigm of the denomination to become more diverse but for both sides this reality of the union is too much to contemplate. For others though who form the majority, it makes them feel robbed of what was theirs and left out in the periphery. For others, though favoured by all the circumstances, it threatens their perceived authority and comfort zone. Judging from all this one can say that though the UPCSA was formed by churches "with ostensibly similar background and ethos have struggled to be faithful to their calling to reflect the oneness of the Church Universal by uniting" (Duncan 2004: 2). As Khabela stated we should always remember that when these things happen, they happen for a reason; "since the church does not operate in a political vacuum, there is always an underlying socio-political context" (Khabela 2000: 7).

All these challenges are being debated in the councils of the denomination but many are frustrated because they feel that the denomination is moving at a snail's pace in addressing these issues. One can sympathise with those because it is now twelve years since the union was formed and these matters are still not resolved. Whilst these challenges are being addressed by the councils of the denomination, it is a biblical imperative for God's Church to continue to maintain the unity of His Body. In order for the Church to build a true sense of unity, it should have a praxis and liturgy that promotes reconciliation, unity and especially fulfilling the primary function of worship which is to glorify and enjoy God within our

cultures. Therefore this research will be looking at these two ecclesial actualities namely Church unity as well as liturgy especially the two in combination.

It is imperative for instance for the worship Service Book of a multi-cultural uniting Church to accommodate multiculturalism. Its liturgy should reflect the acceptance of all those who are members of this body. The Church should welcome, accommodate and be sensitive to all instead of wittingly presenting one culture as a dominant part of the Gospel over and above other cultures. Everyone should feel that they are part of this Church. Long (2001: 17) well illustrates this by answering the question

'Why do People come to Worship?'

"Worshiping God is not simply a good thing to do; but it is a necessary thing to do to be human. The most profound statement that can be made about us is that we need to join with others in bowing before God in worshipful acts of devotions, praise, obedience, thanksgiving, and petition. What is more, when all the clutter is cleared away from our lives, we truly want to worship in communion with others. All of us know somewhere in our hearts that we are not whole without such worship, and we hunger to engage in that practice".

People therefore don't only go to worship to celebrate God's supreme worth but also to "be in the presence of other people – people who know our names and shake our hands and welcome us into the circle"(Long 2001: 25). Long (2001: 30-31) went on to stress that we want to be "accepted for who we are," we desire to be "loved" and to find a "marriage of spirits" and "mutual understanding," to be treated with "authenticity and honesty" and to be "warmly received and embraced" by others. This makes people feel welcome, respected and worthy members of this community. Karkainene (2002: 96) argues that through baptism and faith, biological existence gives way to existence in Koinonia.

**1.2 Research Question**

With all these challenges therefore, this study is intended to delineate liturgical categories in the UPCSA that shed light on the transformative nature of the union that manifest in the liturgical orders of its General Assemblies. To achieve this purpose, it is important to investigate the relationship between liturgical inculturation and unity, and attempt to identify the changing understanding of how these two ecclesial actualities interact. By ecclesial actualities, we mean that liturgy and unity are changing ideas and therefore new ways to link the two must necessarily be found.

This requires the identification of culture in relation to the missionary imperative expressed in the liturgy. Gatu stated that "the time has come for the withdrawal of foreign missionaries from many parts of the Third World; that the churches of the Third World must be allowed to find their own identity; and that the continuation of the present missionary movement is a hindrance to the self-hood of the church" (quoted in Cassidy, Osei-Mensah 1978: 86).

The hypothesis developed is that the transformation of liturgical practices in the UPCSA can enhance the quality of the ongoing process of unification. The objective of this work therefore is to examine liturgies that legitimise non transforming views within the denomination. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to pursue liturgical inculturation as the object of inquiry with a view to improving a better understanding of Church unity.

According to Bosch (1991: 447), this concept of inculturation is a process "in which the pluriform character of contemporary Christianity manifest itself". Liturgical inculturation entails termination of cultural imperialism and allows all cultures to relate effectively to the Gospel without any pressure from other cultures. The central question addressed in this dissertation therefore is:

*What would the Worship Service Book look like in order to enhance unity in the UPCSA?*

This question might evoke a number of responses. For example, if there were differences in the physical structure of the service books of the former denominations such as colour, style for example would this still matter in the united church or not? My interest is merely not the physical or stylistic appearance of the service book but its actual content. What are the central cultural questions that are at play symbolically and practically in the service book of the UPCSA that enhance unity or perhaps hinder it? It is important to note that not all congregations including ministers who lead services strictly follow the Worship Service Book, but because of the limited scope of the research endeavour this Worship Service Book is a good starting point.

The sub-questions for the research following from the main research question as stated above are as are as follows:

- *Do physical structural differences of the Service Books of the former denominations still matter in the UPCSA or not?*

- *Does the Service Book enhance unity?*

- *How do ministers appropriate the existing worship Service Book with regard to its promotion of church unity?*

- *What good qualities are needed to enhance the Service Book to be a liturgical instrument that is acceptable for everyone in assisting in the process of unification?*

- *What can be done to improve the content of the Service Book to assist with the process of unification that can be celebrated in liturgy?*

## 1.3 Outline and Chapters of the Research

Chapter 1 of this study sketches briefly the historical background of the UPCSA in relation to the union and states the research question to be studied. It also provides a summary of questions to be answered and formulates a hypothesis.

Chapter 2 develops the methodological and theoretical framework by using a qualitative dimension incorporating an anthropological and a theological approach. The initial point in the research is the use of Post's methodology of "interference and intuition" as a primary approach (Wepener 2001: 7-8). Alongside with this qualitative dimension incorporating an anthropological and a theological approach within liturgy and participatory observation are employed (Wepener 2001: 12).

Keywords and terms are also defined in this chapter.

In Chapter 3, a historical probe is conducted focusing on the role of liturgy in uniting the church and promoting the aspiration for a greater degree of order, dignity and uniformity. The Presbyterian Theology of Unity will be discussed referring to the early fathers of reformation: Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Knox.

In Chapter 4 the researcher explores the potential of the transformative power of liturgy in the process of unification.

Chapter 5 presents the empirical findings of the research on the role of liturgy in enhancing unity in the UPCSA. Results are discussed and interpreted with respect to the hypotheses developed.

The researcher concludes in Chapter 6 by bringing all the qualities together and presents findings and recommendations that demonstrates the role of liturgy in the process of unification in the UPCSA.

## 1.4 Conclusion

Apart from understanding the cultural questions that are at play, it is important to critically evaluate the liturgy that is currently being used. Does it enhance unity? If the answer is in the affirmative, then how can it be improved? What good attributes/qualities can enhance the Service Book to be a liturgical instrument that is acceptable to everyone (both cultures)? If the answer is in the negative, what can be done to improve its content to assist with the process of unification that can be celebrated in liturgy? How can the so called '*liturgia condenda'* or 'liturgy in the making' be served through this research in order to develop a theory for praxis which will serve the unification process rather than hinder it?

## Chapter 2: Method and Theory

**Key words:**

Liturgy, ritual, unity (church) and liturgical inculturation,

### 2.1 Introduction

This research is a theological exploration carried out within the field of Liturgical Studies in Reformed customs and traditions. This chapter presents the method and theory used in this research and defines keywords and terms related to the study. The research process of this liturgical study is outlined in order to establish a theological exploration of the relation of the role of liturgy in the process of unification. The methodology helps to understand how data for this research was gathered and how the facts were established in order for the findings and the conclusion that has been presented in the last chapter.

In this study the object and aim of the research influences the choices with regard to the research process (Post 2001: 61). Post maintains that "The need for criteria that can control and give the choice direction is still more pressing with regard to the choice of suitable inculturating qualities from the interference of series of qualities" (200I:620). Wepener (2009: 11) also state that "with regard to methodology …. object and aim of the research influence the choices." The first part of this chapter outlines the methodology employed in this research and presents Post's liturgical research methodology of 'interference and intuition' as a main approach (Post 2001: 61-62). The second and the last part of the chapter have focused on the theoretical concepts used in the study.

## 2.2 Method

According to Post (2001), Liturgical Studies as a discipline has no fixed list of orderliness and considerations. It has an open, contextual and multidisciplinary practice. The study lives by benevolence of interchanges across academic boundaries, associations and connections with other disciplines (Post 2001: 47). For this reason therefore, there are various research approaches that are used in Liturgical Studies.

Wepener (2009: 12) cites Barnard who for instance, makes a distinction between these approaches *viz.* Practical Theological, Systematic Theological, Historical, and Biblical-Theological methods. In his systematic classification of approaches, Barnard substitutes the sub-heading 'Practical Theological approach' with 'Anthropological approach', though he used both terms in his inaugural lecture as professor of Liturgy at the University of Amsterdam.

Post on the other hand made a distinction amongst nine different approaches within the field of Liturgical Discipline *viz.* "Historical; Anthropological; Semiotic; Pastoral liturgical; Empirical liturgical; Arts; Systematic Theology; Women's Spirituality and Biblical-Theological approaches". Post also advocates that these approaches should be perceived as unbound and complementary to one another (Wepener 2009: 12).

Despite the variety of approaches in liturgy, for the purposes of this study therefore, the methodology entails qualitative dimension incorporating anthropological and theological approaches within liturgy (Wepener 2009: 12). This approach is applied in this research using the core tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation of Osmer (2008) *viz.* the descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative and pragmatic tasks. These tasks helped the researcher to answer three questions that guides his analysis and response to UPCSA situation and these questions are:

What is going on?

Why is this going on?

What ought to be going on? (Osmer 2008: 4).

The qualitative approach allows the researcher to use all the above approaches because in itself it has many forms and approaches that serve as a symbol for truth, power and knowledge. These forms of qualitative dimension are observation, participation, interviewing, visual, interpretive analysis and ethnography (Denzin & Lincoln 2008: 3).

The researcher used participatory observation which also involves a number of approaches and observations (Wepener 2010 30 (C3: 194). This approach enabled the researcher to study liturgy in the natural setting of congregations, interpret or attempt to make sense of the observable facts in terms of the meaning the congregations bring to them. As it is often said that each practice makes the world visible in a different way, Wepener (2009: 12) also alludes to this when he says; "It is, however, extremely problematic to incorporate and/or categorise all the developments in this field under one overarching approach". (Wepener (2009:12) refers to Post who recommends that all the nine different approaches within the domain of Liturgy Studies Science are open and complementary to one another.

For the object and the aim of this study, which is Liturgical Studies (rituals) and the so called "*liturgia condenda*" meaning liturgy in making, the researcher complements the qualitative approach with anthropological and theological approaches within liturgy. Wepener in (*Practical Theology in South Africa Vol. 20(1):109-127.*) cites Barnard who states that Liturgists these days embrace the opinion that the study of liturgy is the study of Christian rituals and in view of this, disciplines that regard symbols and rituals as objects of research might be useful in Liturgical Studies.

A Qualitative approach has no one theory or paradigm, nor set of methods or practices that are distinctly its own (Denzin & Lincoln 2008: 9). "Qualitative researchers use semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival and phonemic analysis, even statistics tables, graphs and numbers" (Denzin & Lincoln 2008: 9). They also draw on and apply the approaches,

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methods, and techniques of ethno methodology, hermeneutics, deconstructionism, ethnography, interviewing, participant observation, feminism, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, and survey research among others (Denzin & Lincoln 2008: 9).

Wepener (2009: 13) alludes to Schleiermacher's view when he describes the study of liturgy as a Practical Theological inquiry that seeks to develop the celebration/*doksa* of the congregation which finds expression in worship and celebration so that the gospel can be effectively communicated. For this to be accomplished the object of the study has to be the celebrating congregation as well as a Theology of celebration and an anthropological and theological approach has been applied. For the purpose of this study both the Gospel and interviewees with their practical realities are also incorporated applying Paul Post's liturgical theory "interference and intuition" and may from time to time refer and include other approaches.

The purpose of utilising the qualitative approach incorporating anthropological and theological research paradigms and applying Osmer's (2008) practical theological tasks is to overcome any weaknesses so that these paradigms should complement one another. With the qualitative research dimension, the researcher was able to collect a variety of empirical materials *viz.* visual texts, articles, cultural texts, document practical events, apply personal experience, use practical observation and record what the interviewees say in relation to their personal experiences on the ground. All this information is used within Post's liturgical research methodology of "interference and intuition" (Wepener 2004: 34-37).

### 2.2.1 Study of the Manual of Faith and Order

As it has been raised as a concern in the background of the preamble above, it is imperative that the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA be studied in relation to the union in order to establish whether it promotes unity and/or uniformity of procedures throughout the church.

As mentioned before, the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA became the Manual of Law and Procedure of the former PCSA (1996). This was as a result of a proposal made by the RPCSA out of sheer good faith without knowing that this would disadvantage them in future. The proposal was as a result of a belief from the RPCSA that the PCSA manual was more advanced compared to that of the former RPCSA (Duncan 2005: 5).

Though the Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA is amended from time to time, it is a fact that some are more privileged than others in the union. Even what appeared to be the First Edition of the new Manual of Faith and Order of the UPCSA, this only captured former PCSA traditions and neglected cultures and traditions of the former RPCSA and that required one group to change while the other group remained in its comfort zone and was not required to change (Duncan 2005: 5). "The acid test of a loving relationship is the willingness of married partners to change and adjust for the sake of one another, because they love one another" (Statement by concerned members [of the Presbytery of Amatola] to the ExCom of the SCU, East London, 23 July 2000: 2).

Some in the union who were not acquainted with this manual viewed it as a weapon of domination used by others (predominantly white PCSA) to have authority and dominance over them (Black RPCSA) (Min. Interviews 7, Executive Committee of the Special Commission on Union, 21 July 2000). As a result of these concerns, the Executive Committee pleaded for sensitivity in the application of the manual by the presbyteries, especially where issues of culture or custom are concerned (Min. Interviews 7, Executive Committee of the Special Commission on Union, 21 July 2000). Post cautions that liturgical inculturation establishes two fundamental elements involving double movement, with profound dynamic of cultus and cultures (Post 2001:53).

## 2.2.2 Study of the Service Book and Ordinal

The Service Book and Ordinal of the UPCSA like the Manual of Faith and Order, is also that of the former PCSA published by the authority of the General Assembly of the PCSA in

1984. The initial Service Book and Ordinal in the PCSA was produced in 1921. The purpose was to accommodate an aspiration for a greater degree of order, dignity and uniformity (Service Book and Ordinal of UPCSA 1984).

The ministers of the PCSA with Scottish backgrounds did not use this book (Service Book and Ordinal), instead they used the Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland published in 1940. This book emphasises the conspicuous importance of Sacraments. Another new Service Book and Ordinal was published by PCSA in 1967. All these three Service Books were used (Service Book and Ordinal of UPCSA 1984).

The Bantu Presbyterian Church which later became the RPCSA on the other hand was using "*Iinkonzo zaMabandla aseRhabe*" which is a Xhosa version of the Book of Common Order of the Church of Scotland (Xapile 1999: 125). This book "*Iinkonzo zamabandla aseRabe*" was written in 1951 by Rev William Forbes and Dr. W. Rubusana who also translated it into Xhosa (*Iinkonzo zaMabandla aseRhabe 1982: 3*).

In an attempt to have the UPCSA service book owned by everyone, the General Assembly took the same PCSA Service Book and Ordinal and changed its appearance and attached "Uniting" as a prefix. The only change in this Service Book and Ordinal is the cover and not the content. As a result most of the black congregations of the UPCSA (especially from the former RPCSA) don't use this Service Book and Ordinal instead they used the Xhosa version of the Church of Scotland "*Iinkonzo zaMabandla aseRhabe*" direct translation 'the Services Book of the congregations of the Presbyterian family'.

In spite of the qualitative research and in addition to it the researcher will study the above texts and compare the content thereof with what actually liturgically happens on congregational levels. This is in accordance with Post's designation (what the manual says should happen) and appropriation (what the people are doing). The researcher will do a study of both texts and beyond.

## 2.2.3 Interviews

The first step of this study was to apply for permission from the Central Office of the UPCSA to carry out this research. As soon as permission had been granted, the researcher began with the study. The tools that inform the design are mainly participant observation and interviews with four currently serving ministers (i.e. two white ministers and two black ministers) and two emeritus ministers (one white and one black). The researcher chose ethnographic interviews as one of the methodological tools of qualitative research (Flick U. 2009: 170).

The challenge is how to form discussions which develop in the field of Liturgical Studies into interviews in which the unfolding experiences and practices are aligned with the study methodically (Flick U. 2009: 169). Unlike other types of interviews where time and place are organised solely for the interview, outline of ethnographic interview is less clearly defined (Flick U. 2009: 169).

Spradley (1979: 58-59) unambiguously suggests that; "it is best to think of ethnographic interviews as a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher slowly introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants. Exclusive use of these new ethnographic elements, or introducing them too quickly, will make interviews become like formal interrogation. Rapport will evaporate, and informants may discontinue their co-operation".

The difference between "friendly conversations" and this interview is that the researcher made a special request to hold the interviews subsequent from the research question. The researcher explained why he wants to hold an interview and this explanation was in simple language in which the interviewees can relate.

These interviews play a crucial role for a better understanding of the shaping of the content of the Service Book and included issues pertaining to liturgical unification and inculturation derived from literature review (i.e. Manual of Faith and Order, Service Book, General Assembly Resolutions and "*Iinkonzo zaMabandla aseRhabe*"). The informed letters of

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consent were signed by all interviewees and their rights to privacy were respected. Consent was completed by all participants and a strict confidentiality was observed. With the qualitative research dimension, the researcher records what the interviewees say and documents practical events. The interviewees expressed their personal experiences on the ground.

### 2.2.4 Literature Study

The purpose of a literature review is to provide the background for this enquiry. It is also to see how other researchers have explored this study with the purpose of understanding how they abstracted the research problems, what they have unearthed as empirical and what tools they have employed (Mouton 2001: 6).

The focus of the literature study in this research is on books, dissertations, journal articles, service books, manuals, presbyteries and General Assembly decisions on unity, liturgy and uniformity. Through this process the researcher acquires an insight of views and hypotheses explored and relates to them selectively for the purpose of this study in harmony with the objectives and aims of this research. This helps the researcher to conceptualise the research problem, compare and generalise findings (Flick U. 2009: 48) because it would be naïve of him to think that there has never been any exploration in this subject or he is going to discover explorations that are new to this study. This study may have never been researched but it will most definitely connect with existing discoveries (Flick U. 2009: 48).

Xapile (1999: 125-126), for instance, in his unpublished PhD thesis refers to an unpublished report on the Service Book in 1968. A Committee was appointed to record, as far as possible, all service books and hymnals in use or under preparation, to note the content, availability and otherwise and to make proposals for future coordinated action in respect of printing, further preparation and\or consolidation.

This had never happened because until the time of the union in 1999, the PCSA had been using different service books and hymnals for different cultural groups within the

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denomination. Even at the time of union there had never been an interest or urgency to address the issue of service books to encourage uniformity.

The fundamental doctrinal theological matters like Confession of Faith are being amended by the General Assembly from time to time, but the big and interesting question is for whom? Is it for the entire denomination or for a certain section or group within the church? The answer to this question is that for as long as the Service Book and Ordinal is not used by the majority of the members of the church (who are black people), these changes are not meant for them.

Thus in conclusion with regard to method this study makes use of a combination of a literature study namely the study of books in these particular denominations that are important for a better understanding of the liturgy as well as the mentioned qualitative research consisting mostly of ethnographic interviews.

### 2.3 Theory

As mentioned above, qualitative research has no theory or paradigm, nor set of methods or practices that are distinctly its own but covers various research approaches. The difference is only in the theoretical hypothesis of each study, the manner in which the object of that study is understood and its methodological emphasis (Flick 2009: 57). According to (Flick 2009: 57) these various approaches are based on three basic views:

- The tradition of symbolic interactionism which is concerned with subjective meanings and individual meaning making.
- Ethno methodology which is concerned with daily routines of life and their outcome.
- Structuralism and psychoanalytic standpoints which begin from the process of psychological or social unconsciousness.

For the purpose of this study, the theoretical positions to be applied are traditional symbolic interactionism with subjective meanings and an ethnomethodology that is concerned with

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what happens in the congregations of the UPCSA on Sundays and what the outcome is. This is enhanced by the interviews the researcher arranged. The researcher focused on the subject's points of view and on the meaning they attribute to experiences and events, as well as the orientation towards the meaning of objects, activities and events and this informs the large part of qualitative research (Flick 2009: 59).

As this study proceeds and data is gathered, it is essential to define some key concepts in order to assist in the understanding of the data collected and ultimately interpret it. The concepts to be defined are liturgy, ritual, unity (church) and liturgical inculturation. Explanations given about these concepts can help in the understanding and interpretation of the information collected (Wepener 2009: 32).

### 2.3.1 Liturgy

Every liturgical celebration should be centred on Christ, the mystery of His death and resurrection. Through liturgy, Christ should keep supremacy in the divine worship. Any liturgy that relegates Christ to the margin of Christian worship is not liturgy and it misses what has to be the primary objective of liturgy (Chupungco 1982: 13).

Wepener (2009: 21) defines liturgy as "the encounter between God and man in which God and man move out towards one another, a movement in which God's action has primacy, so that in a theonomic reciprocal fashion a dialogical communication in and through rituals and symbols is established in which man participates in a bodily way and can in this way reach his highest goal in life, namely to praise God and enjoy Him forever". This definition clearly points to the facts that within liturgy God and man meet one another and converse in a mutual figurative manner in their own distinctive roles.

Although it is within acceptable limits that liturgy should become accustomed and transformed to the cultures and traditions of people, there are fundamental liturgical principles which are key and obligatory for this process of encounter and communication between God

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and man. Chupungco (1982: 11-12) refers to Bugnini's directive and operational liturgical principles:

- Liturgy is the performance of Christ's priesthood.
- Liturgy is the peak and source of the life of the church.
- Full and active participation is the right and duty of all those who are faithful.
- Liturgical services are not private functions, but are celebrations belonging to the church.
- Liturgy requires substantial unity of the whole community of faith not to impose a rigid uniformity.
- Certain traditions especially those that are incontrovertible may be retained and yet remain open to legitimate development.
- The use of vernacular instead foreign languages in the liturgy.
- The importance of the word of God in the celebration of the liturgy.
- Active participation in the liturgy requires catechetical aspects of liturgical rites and texts.
- Liturgical hymns and tunes are an integral part of liturgy.

According to Chupungco (1982: 11), these fundamental liturgical principles are indispensable.

From a sociological point of view Tillo (2001: 125) declares that liturgical celebrations and other jovial occasions where people convey their feelings in a collective manner, say a lot about the time and place in which these celebrations take place. These liturgical celebrations do not only mirror the faithfulness or religious conviction of a community but also disclose their way of thinking, responsibilities and the roles they play in daily life and their traditions and preferences. Generally speaking liturgy in its all different features is an abstract presentation of a mysterious and hidden reality.

## 2.3.2 Ritual

"Actions speak louder than words. As worship leaders, we should keep this in mind constantly. Words are fine, as far as they go. But sometimes the most important experiences of life are too deep for words" (Willimon 1984: 51).

Bradshaw and Melloh (2007: 2) state that to study liturgy as a ritual be it historical or current liturgical practices, or based on observation or experiences rather than theory, is to study liturgy. Many liturgists agree that for a long time this approach had not been explored until recently, maybe because the very mention of ritual makes people suspicious. There have always been misgivings among theologians about rituals. Some theologians were adamant that both the uncontrolled embrace of the ethos of the sacred rites, mysteries, sacraments and a stern Puritanism were heretical. They pointed out the contrasting dangers of regarding the words of worship as meaningless in themselves and hence as magic or merely as a means for expressing doctrinal teaching.

This suspicion is worse amongst Protestants, because in essence, the Reformation was a remonstration against the way in which the Word of God had been overshadowed by rituals in medieval Christianity. Practice of ritual was pronounced as a deterioration of Christianity into paganism (Bradshaw and Melloh 2007: 2). Christian rituals therefore are saved from magic and from paganism by the everlasting awareness that in the act of worship, Christ is at the centre. He comes among his people and rituals therefore are in fact the act through which God encounters us and we encounter God.

Although the noticeable interest for liturgists to study rituals was from the 1960's, the assorted results of the reforms introduced by the Second Vatican Council stimulated new attention to human dynamics of liturgy. It became clear that the implementation of these reforms was problematic and it seemed more thoughtful and researched knowledge and understanding of the human dynamics of liturgy as ritual behaviour was needed. This aroused the interest of a number of anthropologists' especially British anthropologists (Bradshaw and Melloh 2007: 10).

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Since ritual as a field is studied by a number of disciplines which have different objects and aims, one would imagine that there would be many definitions of ritual, which is indeed the case. Bradshaw and Melloh (2007: 11) quote Rappaport who defines ritual as the acts of a more or less unchanging sequence of formal performances and expressions not set by the performer.

Psychologists look at ritual as a behavioural instinct that serves the needs of an individual. Anthropologists on the other hand look at ritual from a different perspective. They see ritual as a behaviour that serves the interests of the collective, be it the family or community to maintain its solidarity, unity and cultural consistency by practicing its values. All this occurs in the presence of various kinds of threats (Bradshaw and Melloh 2007: 11).

With the above definitions, for the purpose of this study, it would be proper to indicate what liturgists understand by the term 'ritual' and how can the phenomenon be investigated methodically (Wepener 2009: 33). Religious ritual embraces both approaches of enabling people "collectively as well as individually to face the boundary situations of human existence" (Bradshaw and Melloh 2007: 11 – 12). Wepener (2009: 33) cites Grimes who differentiates ritual from 'rite', and 'ritualisation'. Grimes describes a 'rite' as a definite, fixed pattern of acting at specific times and places, differentiating itself from usual standard behaviour. Ritualisation then becomes a daily ritual behavioural act and also the forming of rituals. It helps to understand the relationship between usual everyday life and ritual life, and how rites come out of everyday human behaviour.

The definition for ritual is seen by many liturgists like Grimes and Post for instance as summarised to an extent that it is not easy for one to understand the substance of ritual. Hence they would rather define ritual by its qualities instead of trying to give vague definitions that would not even begin to explain ritual (Wepener 2009: 34).

Notwithstanding this Wepener (2009: 36) continues to define ritual as "self-evident, symbolic actions that are often repeated, interactive and corporeal, sometimes accompanied by texts and formulas, aimed at the transfer of values in the individual or group, and of which the form

and content are always culture, context and time bound, so that the involvement in the reality which is presented in the rituals remains dynamic". This definition can assist researchers precisely what to record during the research process.

According to Van Beek (2012: 17) rituals are normal common performances people comprehend with well as a way of life, easy to repeat and cognitively optimal. This takes us to another point; do rituals have a meaning? This question had already been answered by Staal supported by other scholars such as Rappaport, Bloch and Boyer that rituals in principle have no essential meaning. Another question is; "if a ritual act does not have intrinsic meaning, why do people all over the world attach a lot of meaning to those very acts, and to their proper, correct performance?" This mystery is resolved by the straightforward and undoubted fact that this performance is identifiable within a culture and therefore it is not a normal performance but a ritual. The main objective of the service is that people are in a different sphere altogether where they have to submit to the ritual approach and play their roles accordingly (Van Beek 2012: 18). This discussion of rituals brings us to the concept of church unity.

### 2.3.3 Unity (Church)

*"IBANDLA likaKrestu*
*Lisiseko sinye…….*
*Yimbumba yabanyulwa*
*Bezizwe ngezizwe"*

"The church's one foundation……

Like the doctrine of the Apostles' Creed, which declares "one, holy, catholic and apostolic church", this hymn states that the Church is one foundation, Christ as the foundation and the church as His body. The Church in its nature embodies unity. The unity of the church generates from the unity of that which forms the foundation of the church, "one Lord, one

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faith, one baptism. One God and Father of all" (Eph. 4: 1-5). The church is one "body of Christ" - a community of people who through faith and baptism are "in Christ". Meyer (1999: 8) states that "the uniqueness of Christ constitutes, at the same time, the unity of those who are in him".

The unity of the church is not safeguarded or sustained by men or human desires, but it is eternal, God given and deep rooted in the Trinitarian foundation of the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Meyer 1999: 10). The unity of the church is concretised in the triune God who lives in the communion of the three persons – as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and turns to human kind (Meyer 1999: 67). The unity of the church therefore belongs to the nature of the church. It is a subject of Christian faith, not of our disposition or consideration of mere utility (Meyer 1999: 8).

Form the point of view of the Reformation, the unity of the church is located at the centre of the doctrine of justification through the gospel. Rituals, rites and traditions are not the determining factors of church unity because they emerged in the history of the church as a result of ecclesiastical assertions and resolutions. They were not given by God from the commencement of the church but evolved in the history of the church. Rituals, rites and traditions are established by human beings. They cannot therefore be a determining feature for the unity of God's institution, His Church (Meyer 1999: 18).

It is important to understand that the unity of God's church doesn't depend on human factors such as rituals, rites and, traditions. But it is equally important though to understand that it is not disputed that these factors may uphold unity especially if they serve the gospel and its proclamation. But the unity of the church doesn't depend on them. Instead it depends on that which makes the church what it is, that is the realisation of God through the proclamation of the gospel by Word and Sacrament (Meyer 1999: 18-19). The church is built and united by the Holy Spirit. According to (Lohfink 1999: 292), the church is not determined by a mystical divinity that belongs to it by nature, but by the Holy Spirit who is given to it and that Spirit is clearly defined as the Spirit of God the Father and of the Son Jesus Christ.

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The decisive factor of church unity in the Reformed tradition is the distinction between the essential and nonessential for the unity of the church. It adheres to the dogma which is based on the Word of God. It is preceded by the principle of whether something is "transmitted by the Lord in Scriptures," "the divine Word," or "according to Christ's ordinance," or whether it is only "instituted by human beings" (Meyer 1999: 37).

This theological consideration of the church and its unity is useful in this study. It helps us to redefine what we regard as the pillars of union in the UPCSA and to rediscover God given the foundation of unity that determines the shape, direction, ethos, theological mission outlook of the new denomination. This reflection of church unity brings to our attention what should be the compass for the UPCSA and all other churches that are in similar situations in South Africa.

### 2.3.4 Liturgical inculturation

Liturgical inculturation is a fairly new concept that has recently gained popularity in liturgical studies. It only emerged in the 1960's (Wepener 2001: 37). According to Chupungco (1982: 28) inculturation has become a dynamic subject in the church after the Second Vatican Council and triggered among theologians and liturgists a profound interest that is often mixed with anxious anxieties. Inculturation is regarded as something that belongs to the mystery of the incarnation. It affects everything that touches on the relationship between God and His people. It is therefore not only an anthropological aspect but also a theological feature of this study.

Liturgical inculturation is a method whereby the transcripts and rituals are used in worship by the local congregation and are so inserted on the basis of culture that they absorb its thought, language and ritual patterns. It works according to the dynamics of insertion in a given culture and fundamental assimilation of cultural elements. From a purely anthropological approach, therefore inculturation allows the congregation to experience in liturgical celebrations a

cultural event whose language and ritual practices they are able to identify as elements of their culture (Chupungco 1982: 29).

Wepener (2001: 37) states that Western culture is brought into a local culture along with the Christian message and this happens at the expense of the local culture. Bosch (1991: 447) explains that there was an intentional determination by the West to raise people from their indigenous 'inferior cultures' using Christian faith and raising them to the level of Western civilisation. This predicament started when the Western cultural paraphernalia was presented as the essence of the Gospel. Every now and then indigenous people are coerced or mesmerised into being converted to a foreign culture rather than the Gospel.

The concept of liturgical inculturation therefore permits indigenous cultures to link up more effectively to the Gospel on their own terms and without pressure from outside (Cassidy & Osei-Mensah 1978: 82). This brings us to another very important point that liturgy should never impose on culture. There should be a mutual kind of correlation and compromise between liturgy and culture. Liturgical inculturation does not undermine culture and its internal dynamism (Chupungco 1982: 31).

Inculturation is not autonomous; there must be a give-and-take logical modus operandi and mutual respect between culture and liturgy. This is what Lukken, as said by (Wepener 2009: 39) calls "continuous process of critical interaction and assimilation between both culture and liturgy or Christian message". And with reference to Wepener (2009: 39), Van Tongeren perceives this "so-called reciprocal integration" as a distinguishing factor between inculturation and other concepts like enculturation, indigenisation, adaptation and accommodation. Chupungco (1982: 32) cites the paradigm that liturgical inculturation necessitate liturgy and culture producing inculturated liturgy not liturgy and culture. Both culture and liturgy blend within each other and produce an inculturated liturgy. According to Wepener "liturgical inculturation refers to a critical and reciprocal interaction between cult and culture in which a new reality comes into being, namely an inculturated liturgy (cf. inter alia Amalorpavadass 1990; Barnard 2000b; Lukken 1994b; Lukken 1996; Wepener 2006 and

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Post's critical observations in Post 2006:112–116). In and through this process certain aspects coming from tradition are preserved and handed over, and others are not".

This means that this process of liturgical inculturation doesn't assimilate all aspects of culture into liturgy. Some aspects of culture are assessed, analysed and some thrown away through this process of liturgical inculturation. And this constructive method creates a potential environment to reform and live anew the Christian faith in each human culture (Wepener 2009: 39).

Christianity started as a movement within a particular culture which is Judaism and it is rooted in that culture. Our Lord himself is rooted in Jewish culture which he valued deeply by being faithful to it. He visited the temple, preached in the synagogues, and celebrated the Passover and many more Jewish cultural activities. The early church never rejected Paganism and this attitude was essential and it paid dividends for the early church (Chupungco 1982: 6-7).

The present day church as in the early ages should not reject the tradition and culture of its members. According to Chupungco (1982: 19) "this attitude of not destroying but of rectifying, ennobling and reorienting the traditions of the chosen people characterized early Christianity's approach to adaptation". Transformation of liturgy is by no means a drifting away from Scripture or the historical origins of the church but it should maintain the link between Scripture and the cultural practices of the people. Scripture should always as it has been through the ages be "the principal source of inspiration for the composition of liturgical texts" (Chupungco 1982: 18).

Liturgical inculturation should not be a process that only happens when missionaries take the Gospel to faraway places and there strive to allow the Gospel and the liturgy to take root in the ethos of the people to whom they evangelise. It should happen constantly at every time and at every place (Wepener, *Liturgy on the Edge of Tradition1* Dept of Practical Theology, University of the Free State). According to Wepener (*Practical Theology in South Africa* vol

23(2): 313-335) liturgical inculturation "has to do with continuous discernment and discernment regarding discernment".

Inculturation therefore is an approach of liturgical adaptation. Though this is the case, liturgical adaptation on the other hand is not a new unfamiliar phenomenon of the church, but a constant feature of the church. It has been part of the long tradition of the church. According to Chupungco (1982: 3), liturgical adaptation has been brought to the limelight because of the Second Vatican's renewed sense of pluralism within the church and respect of people's cultures.

## 2.4 Conclusion

The above methodical and theoretical outline presents a distinction with regard to the approach, hypothesis and literature applied in this study. The comprehensive approach involves qualitative aspects incorporating anthropological and a theological approach within liturgy and this helps to comprehend how information for this research was gathered and how the actualities are verified in order to develop the findings and the conclusion that are presented in the final chapter.

## Chapter 3: History (Focusing on Unification in combination with Liturgy)

### 3.1. Introduction

In this chapter the researcher will conduct a brief historical probe focusing strictly on the union of the UPCSA in combination with liturgy. The Presbyterian theology of unity will also be discussed referring to the early fathers of reformation *viz.* Martin Luther, John Calvin and John Knox. For the purpose of this research the focus will be in the last five hundred years of the history of reformation laying emphasis on sources in the 1800s looking at the influence of Reformation in Western Europe in liturgy and worship.

The purpose is to establish whether or not the union of the UPCSA is within the ethos, tradition and procedures of the reformation as defined by the above early fathers. It is also to determine the role of liturgy in the process of reformation and unification.

### 3.2. Historical Probe in the union of the UPCSA

It is more than twelve years since the establishment of the UPCSA. This episode came after many decades of division motivated by fear and domination (Xapile 1994: iv).

The UPCSA was established with the union of the PCSA and RPCSA which themselves were the products of two streams of the Scottish branch of Southern African Presbyterianism. From its commencement, this Scottish branch of Southern African Presbyterianism came as a divided entity (Duncan 2005: 2) and this rift made Presbyterianism in South Africa to suffer profoundly.

The first stream of Presbyterian tradition from Scotland came to South Africa with a brigade of Scottish army that arrived in 1806 (Duncan 2005: 2) for diplomatic motives to predominantly reinforce white domination in South Africa. This is what Vellem (2009: 45)

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calls the 'Settler Tradition'. In 1812 this 'Settler Tradition' initiated a Calvinist Society which was later constituted into a congregation which became St Andrews Presbyterian Church in Cape Town. This resulted in the formation of 'colonial' congregations and Presbyteries all over South Africa (Duncan 2005: 2).

The second stream of Presbyterian tradition from Scotland emerged as a result of the Glasgow Missionary Society that sent Rev John Ross as a missionary at Tyhume in the Eastern Cape in 1823 (Duncan 2005: 2).

In 1843 there was the Scottish Disruption called 'Great Disruption' which resulted to a schism that created two separate churches in Scotland *viz.* the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland and Free Church of Scotland (Vellem 2009: 46). This schism lasted for more than half a century, and it left the Glasgow Mission Society loyal to the Free Church of Scotland whereas the status of missionaries of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland remained unchanged (Duncan 2005: 2).

### 3.2.1. The Formation of PCSA and RPCSA

As early as 1882, efforts were made to unite Presbyterian 'colonial' congregations and Presbyteries which were established since 1812 (Duncan 2005: 39). As a result, a Federal Council was established in 1882 to lead union negotiations. The aim was to form one united Presbyterian Church in South Africa advocating the ideal of being a multi-racial church (Bax 1997: 1).

After a lengthy period of negotiations, on the 17th September 1897, the Federal Council constituted itself as the First General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of South Africa (PCSA), a predominantly white church (Duncan 2005: 2). Vellem (2009: 45) states that this newly established church was not a product of missions but a gathering of people who were professed Presbyterians and associates who intended to establish their own independent

Church.  As a result of this, the Free Church Synod of Kaffraria by and large consisting of black members refused to enter into union stating that:

> "While the Synod recognized the desirability of union among various branches of the Presbyterian Church in South Africa, and hopes that existing obstacles may be removed in course of time, they are unable to enter into the proposed union at present in consequence of want of acquiescence on the part of several of the native congregations in two Presbyteries, and in view of discussions which have arisen among Europeans on the subject of the Native vote in Church courts. The Synod agrees to indicate two different directions in which some modification of the arrangements contemplated in the United Church is necessary in order to remove these obstacles. First, that some method is devised of adjusting the balance between Colonial and Mission Churches, which shall be satisfactory to both races; e.g., that a majority of white and a majority of black separately and conjointly, be necessary to pass the proposed measure into law, the proportion of votes of both races in the General Assembly be strictly defined and preserved. Second, that there be a final Court of Appeal in certain questions to be carefully defined, say, to a Board at Home representative of the British Isles, or even of wider range, such as the Pan-Presbyterian Council could easily furnish."  (Minutes of the First GA of the PCSA 17th September 1897: 6-7).

The indispensable fact is that the majority of black people were not in support of union until such time that their concerns which they raised in the quoted minute above were addressed. From this point onwards, the Free Church of Scotland mission experienced an intense aspiration from the Mzimba Secession to establish an autonomous church evolving out of racism and white superiority. This developed to the establishment of the Presbyterian Church of Africa which had never participated in any union negotiations (Duncan 2005: 2).

It was now becoming apparent that the missionary inventiveness was full of brutal ethnic absurdities. The PCSA on the other hand though claimed to be a "multiracial" church, was not prepared to welcome black people on an equal basis with white people. "In time blacks who

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did visit "white" congregations were not always made to feel welcome; some white members and indeed some congregations did not want blacks sitting with them" (Bax 1997: 1).

Black congregations in the PCSA were being administered as a separate "Native Missions Committee" (Bax 1997: 1-2). They were not afforded equal status and dignity in the PCSA. Therefore PCSA was not an appropriate Ecclesiastical for black interests. This created an apprehensive environment which strengthened the argument that there was a need for a "native experiment, self –supporting, self-sufficient, self-propagating Native church" in South Africa (Vellem 2009: 46).

In 1900 the two Scottish churches which split in 1843 were united to establish the United Free Church of Scotland (Duncan 2005: 2). This union of the Church of Scotland raised some hopes that it can be an inspiration for the unity of its missions in South Africa, something which could lead to the establishment of one Presbyterian Church in South Africa. But alas, its missions in South Africa remained separated (Vellem 2009: 46). In an attempt to fulfill this dream of establishing one church in South Africa, the United Free Church sent two Deputies of the Foreign Mission to explore the aspiration of forming one Presbyterian Church in South Africa.

However it was proven by the Deputies that this dream of one Presbyterian Church in South Africa could not be realised because Blacks were not afforded an equal status by their whites counter parts. And in the long term the two Deputies also comprehended that the answer to the South African context then was to establish a Native Church where natives manage their own affairs (Vellem 2009: 47). On the 11 July1923, at Lovedale, the Bantu Presbyterian Church of South Africa renamed the Reformed Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa in 1979 was constituted.

### 3.2.2. The Founding of UPCSA

All endeavours made between 1937 and 1990 to unite the PCSA and RPCSA failed as a result of mistrust, fear of racism and religious hegemony. Stringer (2005: 90) states that hegemony "is a process by which the winning side maintains its own discourse as the dominant one to the exclusion of all others, and the process by which the ruling elite use its discourse to maintain its own position of power". This was aggravated by the fact that the South African government was enforcing racial discrimination and white supremacy. South Africa was an unholy ground for unity talks as (Xapile 1994: 58) expresses it that church unity: "cannot be discussed in isolation from the experience of those involved".

The dawn of democracy in South Africa became the motivating factor for initiation of unity negotiations between the two denominations. The RPCSA felt embarrassed that the Church had been "overtaken by a secular society in its willingness to forgive past wrongs and to build a united nation" (Duncan 2005: 4). In her General Assembly in June 1994, the RPCSA resolved to give its Ecumenical Relationship Committee mandate to reopen negotiations with the PCSA (Union Committee Report – PCSA and RPCSA 1995). This was a ground breaking decision and it was welcomed by the PCSA in her Assembly in September 1994. Both Churches in their General Assemblies in 1994 urged and encouraged their Presbyteries and Sessions to engage in bilateral talks and/or strengthen relationships at all levels (PCSA Proceedings for General Assembly 1994: 16 and RPCSA Proceeding of the Seventy First General Assembly 1994: 43).

Negotiations for unity between the two denominations resumed and the following were seven common set of reasons for uniting adopted by the 1995 General Assemblies of both denominations:

- "Because a united Church is a valid witness to the power of reconciliation in a divided society.
- Because the fullness of Christian truth and worship between the two Churches can only be truly expressed in unity.

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- Because the Church is truly the Church when it ignores external factors and denominational labels.

- Because the two Churches were formed not as separate Churches but as two branches of one Church.

- Because the two Churches have come of age.

- Because a negative social-political situation has been overcome.

- Because obedience to the Gospel demands it" (RPCSA Ecumenical Relations Committee Report to General Assembly 1995 and PCSA Proceedings of the General Assembly 1995: 67-68).

As the two Churches were sharing a mutual background, there was no significant difference in the area of doctrine. The Twenty Four Articles of the PCSA are parenthetically based on the Westminster Confession which was formally acknowledged by the RPCSA (RPCSA Ecumenical Relations Committee Report to General Assembly 1995 and PCSA Proceedings of the General Assembly 1995: 67-68).

The question of polity and government was never critical because both Churches were using structures that had familiar features of Presbyterianism e.g. Synods and Deacons' Courts. The distinction lay more in the area of tradition e.g. in the RPCSA every minister was eligible to attend General Assembly on condition that he/she was accompanied by an elder. This was to maintain the parity in the number of ministers and elders. The PCSA on the other hand, though they also strived for equality in the number of ministers and elders, their numbers were proportionated according to the number of congregations in each Presbytery (RPCSA Ecumenical Relations Committee Report to General Assembly 1995 and PCSA Proceedings of the General Assembly 1995: 67-68).

It is interesting to note that not all issues were addressed and settled before the union. There were those issues that were regarded as vital *viz.* "the basis for unity structures, organizations and mission of the Churches at various levels". All other issues were regarded as secondary either medium – or longer- term matters that could be settled later or even after the union (Union Committee Report – PCSA and RPCSA 1998). On the 23 September 1999 in Port

Elizabeth, PCSA and RPCSA united to establish the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa.

### 3.2.3. History of liturgical transformation

During the commencement of the Reformation there was actually no common Reformed standard of how the shape of worship should look like. It was therefore up to the local supporters of the Reformation concerning how the shape of worship should be. Liturgical transformation therefore is not a new or strange phenomenon in the church. Historically, liturgical transformation has been a constant feature of the church. It is and has been part of the church's long tradition to transform liturgy. Liturgical transformation is as old as the church itself (Chupungco 1982: 3).

Christianity started as a movement within a particular culture (Judaism) and it rooted in that culture. The head of the church himself, Jesus Christ is rooted in the Jewish culture which he respected greatly by being faithful to it. He visited the temple, preached in the synagogues and celebrated the Passover etc. Apostles too as they were rooted in the Jewish tradition, followed the Lord's example to continue to observe the Law. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the church as a community has lived every historical age preaching the gospel of the Kingdom in the entire world for the witness to all nations (Mathew 24: 14). Throughout history the church had to explain the gospel to (all nations) different people in their different languages using illustrations they are familiar with.

Even during the early ages the church did not reject the traditions and cultures of the people. Through Christian liturgy, the church accepted what was good and noble in pagan religion. Synagogues were never rejected by early Christians but were centred on the person of Christ. Paul for instance when he was in Athens, he admired their sacred monuments but drew the attention of the council of Areopagus to an altar dedicated to an unknown god, explaining the new doctrine in the philosophy of the day and appealed to the writings of the ages (Chupungco 1982: 14).

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Paul understood very well that people within their tradition and culture should wrestle with the demands of the gospel. He understood that it required different strategies to explain the gospel to different locations and people. "In Athens, where intellectual inquiry is expected and public address is a common mode of cultural exchange, Paul plays by the house rules. He offers a discourse that the Stoics and Epicureans would recognize, but it consists of themes that are necessary (if not sufficient) for Christian preaching" Blount and Tisdale (2001: 38). He stood in front of Athenians and acknowledged that in all things they are very religious people. This is evident in the great number of idols they worship. Paul exploited the inscription he saw in the altar, "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD" Acts 17: 23 to propagate the gospel of Christ.

Paul did not speak in derogatory terms about their temples and the idols they worshiped. Instead, he proclaimed the gospel into their culture and made its impact on their total life within their culture. "If these new members had to grasp the faith more fully, this had to be explained in their language and illustrated with ceremonies with which they were familiar" (Chupungco 1982: 14).

This strategy of not rejecting every pagan religion but accepting what was noble in the pagan religion paid dividends for the early church. "This attitude of not destroying but of rectifying, ennobling and reorienting the traditions of the chosen people characterized early Christianity's approach to adaptation" (Chupungco 1982: 9). It was also expected of pagan members that once they were converted, they were to transfer to Christianity all that is good in their tradition and transform the new religion (Chupungco 1982: 9).

### 3.3. The History of liturgy in the Reformed tradition

The researcher will now investigate the history of liturgy in uniting the Church and promoting the aspiration for a greater degree of order, dignity and uniformity. This will accomplished by discussing the theology of unity referring to Martin Luther, John Knox and John Calvin.

### 3.3.1. Luther

There are two fundamental theological inquiries that dominated the Reformation ecclesiology *viz.* the search for 'a gracious God and the true Church'. The continual existence of the reformed movement depended upon the competence of the reformers in answering the central question 'which Church is the *bona fide* Church?' (Avis 1981: 1).

Reformers like Luther became over-enthusiastic to the challenge of making a distinction between the false and the true Church. Their arguments were as though believers were afflicted by the assertion of Rome to be the only true Church and pounded by the mockery that their Church never existed before Luther. Reformers became resolute to their claim that "they were one body with the ancient Church of the Fathers and that they were simply renewing and restoring the face of the Christian Church - one, holy, catholic and apostolic" (Avis 1981: 2).

Luther's input to these theological inquiries was afforded by his drastic straightforwardness in the gospel of free forgiveness and justification by the undeserved grace of God through faith alone. Luther stated that "If you want to be the Church and bear its name, you must prove your title" (Avis 1981: 2). Cassidy (2012: 104) on the other hand distinguished the Church by the marks that Jesus characterised when he was praying for the Church in John 17.

According to Luther all Christians should be able to make a plain and clear distinction between the alleged Church which brags of the name and the true Church which does not bear that name and yet is the true Church. Christians should make a distinction between the Church that is oppressing, rich and with the conviction that its belief is victorious and far superior to any other belief; and the vulnerable, disregarded, executed and even totally refused to be called the Church. For Christians to be able to make this distinction, they should understand and have the correct knowledge of the essence of the Church (Avis 1981: 1).

The fundamental and the original purpose of Luther for Reformation ecclesiology is that it is evangelical and Christological. Meaning that the nature of the Church is understood fully by

reference to the Christian gospel, the authenticity of the person and work of Jesus Christ. Luther was not apprehensive about explaining and labelling the perimeters of the Church, but with declaring its core Christological essence (Avis 1981: 2). His commitment was to determine the marks of the Church – what makes the Church the Church.

### 3.3.1.1. The Gospel

The Church according to Luther was fashioned by the incarnate presence of Christ through his gospel. He vehemently believed that the gospel alone is sufficient to identify the true Church. In his Ninety-five Theses Luther sets a position that 'the true treasure of the Church is the most holy gospel of the glory and grace of God' (Avis 1981: 3). When clarifying this Luther states that "nothing in the Church must be treated with greater care than the holy gospel, since the Church has nothing which is more precious and salutary" (Avis 1981: 3).

Luther claimed that the gospel cannot be without God's people and, equally so, God's people cannot be without the gospel. According to Luther the Church was formed by the living presence of Christ through his gospel. This belief became the underpinning foundation for the whole Reformation fracas and was collectively mutual to all the Reformers. As a result the early Reformers were obstinate in defending this conviction. They were willing even to sacrifice the unity of the Western Church if by so doing they could save the most irreplaceable treasurer of the Church which is the gospel of Christ. It is the gospel that has to shine and this has to happen at all cost and at whatever sacrifice (Avis 1981: 3).

### 3.3.1.2. Music

Unlike Zwingli who regarded music as unbiblical and irrelevant leading people into sin, Luther on the other hand believed in the power of music to communicate his belief to people (Stringer 2005: 188 – 189). Though music was banned in all public worship during Zwingli's

time, Luther in contrast submitted that music supplies a distinct but equivalent significant tool in addition to preaching.

Luther received music and regarded it as fundamental to the preaching of the Word of God. He even considered the Mass as a musical event. Lutheran tradition therefore regarded the role of music within worship as complementing and supplementing the word (Stringer 2005: 201).

According to Stringer (2005: 201) Luther's like of music within worship was influenced by the Hussite tradition which later became the Moravian Church. As a result Luther developed the musical traditions of the church and supplemented them with hymns in the Moravian style and with choirs. To assist Luther in this process, he pulled from Gregorian hymns and loved dance tunes of the time (Stringer 2005: 189). In his music he inserted Biblical words that were applicable to specific periods and seasons of the year (Stringer 2005: 201). Liturgical music in worship therefore is traced through from the Catholic to the Lutheran traditions with little transformation except the use of biblical texts in the language of the local people (Stringer 2005: 201).

### 3.3.1.3 The Eucharist

Luther, like other reformers was of the view that the Eucharist should be retained as fundamental and a most frequent ritual. He corroborated with those reformers who called for a reform of the Mass. He upheld the liturgical transformation of greater involvement of the congregation in the Eucharist and specifically in more reception of the elements of bread and wine (Stringer 2005: 200).

Luther believed that in Mass there should be singing and reading of the Word. Though he was agreeable to the use of the local language, his desire was that all languages *viz.* Latin, German, Greek and Hebrew be used alternately. His concern was the future generation which he believed should not lose the treasure of all these languages and be equipped and

empowered so that it can be able to be Christ's ambassadors in foreign lands. Luther required that hymns be sung in every worship service including the Mass. His belief was that it was the singing of hymns that was helpful in opening the hearts and minds of the people to listen and embrace the Word of God. He understood the glorious "benefit resulting from hearing the Word of God and then uniting as a congregation to offer thanksgiving in song" (Barber 2006: 1).

### 3.3.1.4. Luther's Liturgical Order of Service

Luther was against the idea of making people captives by compelling them by law to practice or do things against their will. According to him orders of service or forms of worship are for the promotion of the service of love and faith. When they begin to be used to injure the very same they were supposed to nurture and promote, they were of no more worth to be used but obliterated and do away with. Orders of Service have their inherent importance in worship but if they are misused to compel worshipers to practice a liturgy that will injure their faith they are no longer orders but disorder. My view in this regard is that such liturgy must be done away with and another liturgical Order of Service prepared (Banas 1995).

As it used to be, a number of Lutheran churches especially the more conservative ones still use the term 'Divine Service' for the Eucharistic Liturgy and those that are more liberal use 'Holy Communion' and 'Eucharist'. This term "Divine Service" replaces the commonly known name for the Mass - "The Service" or "The Holy Communion." The term literally means God-service or service of God which originates from the German word *"Gottesdienst"*. This term is the standard German word for worship (Wikipedia, the free encyclopaedia).

This English phrase "service of God," which corresponds to the German word *"Gottesdienst"* is perhaps vague in the sense that it can be read from both objective and subjective perspectives *viz.* "Service rendered to God" or "God's service rendered to people" respectively. Even though the objective perspective in this regard is the one that is

etymologically more conceivable, the ambiguity and the emphasis on the subjective perspective were often highlighted. This bore the Lutheran doctrine regarding justification, "that the main actor in the Divine Service is God himself and not man, and that in the most important aspect of evangelical worship God is the subject and we are the objects: that the Word and Sacrament are gifts that God gives to his people in their worship" (Brauer 2005: 38).

It is us human beings who worship God, not the other way round. No human being is ever suitable to be worshiped and glorified. It is God alone who deserves to be worship. When we worship God, we worship a Being who is way beyond our ability to understand or control. We need to bow humbly before One who is so much greater than ourselves

The other reason for the use of the term "The Service" (*"Gottesdienst"*) by the Lutherans was to make a distinction between their Service and the worship of other Protestants, which has been centred on the faithful bringing praise and thanksgiving to God

### 3.3.2. Calvin

Calvin's anthropology and epistemology influenced his theory of understanding and interpretation of liturgy and/or even hermeneutic. Like Zwingli, Calvin was a theologian and preacher than being a skilful composer of worship (Stringer 2005: 192).

However Calvin was at all times mindful of the culture that had an effect on him and in turn influenced or transformed that culture. To him, liturgy was not just a monologue consisting of one actor's speech (i.e. the preacher's sermon) without the participation of the congregation (Selderhuis 2009: 417).

The participation of the laity in worship was crucial to Calvin's aim to reform the church. His exposition of liturgy is fully three-dimensional and integrates an interdisciplinary approach

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with deeper awareness of the interplay of intellectual, material (economic) and social history (Selderhuis 2009: 408).

According to Calvin liturgical participation did not just need attention to formal liturgical texts. It also required attention to structural design, music, preaching, church order documents, town regulations and sacramental theology (Selderhuis 2009. 408).

The congregation participated in worship by rising, singing and saying prayers to God and reciting the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed in the language of the local people i.e. French instead of Latin. Worshipers were instructed to stop their medieval practice of praying in Latin but pray in their own language. They were told to stop the practice of praying to the Saints and of uttering their prayers privately. "Prayer was now to be truly public and communal" (Sederhuis 2009. 413).

Worshipers were taught to know the basic doctrine and this was taught in schools, by pastors and at home. They had to know the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed by heart and failure of this was enough grounds for excommunication (Sederhuis 2009: 413).

### 3.3.2.1. Word of God

Calvin devotes word and sacrament as two marks of the true Church. He asserts that wherever the word of God is sincerely preached and heard and sacrament administered according to the institution of Christ, the Church of God continues to live. According to him the Church is instituted by the external, internal and astonishing marks. The covenant between God and His people and union with Christ through the Holy Spirit are the marks that constitute the Church (Avis 1981: 8).

Unlike Luther who suggests that word means the gospel and forgiveness, Calvin's point of departure is that word alone is the Christological centre. According to Calvin the word is giving advice of the correct doctrine and proper Church order. He declares that the purity of

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doctrine, discipline, sacrament and ceremonies that was corrupted by Rome has been brought back by the evangelical Churches. In other words Calvin was firm in his belief that the church consists of two characteristics namely, it is where the Word of God is preached and where the sacraments are properly edified and administered. He combines word and sacrament as *notae ecclesiae* and dedicates them as true marks of the true Church (Avis 1981: 29).

During Calvin's period more time in the liturgy was reserved for the preaching of the Word. The manner in which the architecture of the worship space was designed reflected that the centre of concentration should be the pulpit.

Consequently the pulpit was raised above the congregation visible to everyone. The preacher would dress in a plain black robe with a white collar. Services were strictly one hour and as a result on the pulpit there was an hourglass to help the preacher to keep time and this was a challenge to some preachers (Selderhuis 2009: 411).

### 3.3.2.2. Music

According to Calvin singing was not alienated from prayer but a different form of prayer. His hopes were that singing would bring enthusiasm to prayer. On the side of the pulpit there was a chair for the cantor who was hired by the council to lead the singing during worship. The cantor was also responsible to train children at school to sing the Psalms in public worship. Calvin hoped that the education of the children of the city would lay a foundation for vigorous singing in Sunday services (Selderhuis 2009: 413).

The participation of worshipers in the worship service by singing psalms not only "the vesicles used in the medieval Mass", which were reworked into musical forms, became part of the liturgy since reformation and throughout Calvin's time. Psalms were translated to the language of the local people (from Latin to French) and this helped the congregation to memorise the psalms and able to participate in the singing (Selderhuis 2009: 413).

Though Calvin embraced music and regarded it as something that would bring enthusiasm within worship, he limited it to unaccompanied singing of musical psalms (Stringer 2005: 202). This became the habitual practice that influenced most Protestant churches (Stringer 2005: 202). This practice was a liturgical transformation for it was a departure from the medieval liturgical music of the day to a new liturgical practice.

### 3.3.2.3. The Lord's Supper

During the reformation period in Geneva, the Lord's Supper was not celebrated at an altar but around a table. Calvin insisted that the faithful exposition of Scriptures require that the faithful regard the Lord's Supper not as a sacrifice to be offered to please God, but rather as a feast by which God nourishes the faithful (Selderhuis 2009: 414).

Calvin campaigned for a weekly celebration of the Lord's Supper and asked worshipers to partake. This was perceived by other reformers as too radical. A compromise was reached to celebrate the Lord's Supper at least once per quarter. He arranged for these celebrations in a way that the sacrament was celebrated on a monthly basis somewhere in the city. This was a fundamental shift from the medieval practice where worshipers merely watch the sacraments only once per annum (Selderhuis 2009: 414).

### 3.3.2.4. Calvin's Liturgical Order of Service

Dyck (2009: 1) in his journal 16:1 he talks of Regulative Principle of Worship which originates from the second commandment stating that God must be worshiped in the way that he prescribes; man has no right to invent or add his own ideas or elements into the worship of the true and living God. He says worship is prescribed in this law and this makes it legalistic and formalistic. Calvin says that this rule distinguishes between pure and ineffective worship and it must be of universal application, in order that people may not adopt any self-serving device which seems fit to themselves, but look to the directive of God who alone is entitled to

prescribe. Therefore, if our worship of God is to be pure and authentic, He must be worshiped in the way He prescribes (Calvin 1544).

The reasons given by Calvin for upholding the regulative principle of worship are the sovereignty of God and the sinfulness of man. According to Calvin the purpose of this regulative principle of worship is to establish God's authority so that we do not follow our own desires and preferences but depend entirely on God's sovereignty. Remember, human beings are so irrational to an extent that when given freedom they are able to go astray. "And then when once we have turned aside from the right path, there is no end to our wanderings, until we get buried under a multitude of superstitions" (Dyck 2009: 2).

According to Calvin worship begins with a sensible knowledge of who God is; the Almighty and the Creator of the universe. Calvin states that the main underpinning rule for worship "is to acknowledge Him to be, as He is, the only source of all virtue, justice, holiness, wisdom, truth, power, goodness, mercy, life, and salvation" (Dyck 2009: 3).

The following is Calvin's Order of Service derived from his liturgy "*La Forme des prièrs et chantz ecclèsiastiques, avec la mannière d'administrer les sacremens, et consacrer le marriage, selon la constume de lèglise anciemne* (CO6, 161 – 210)". It starts with an invocation by using Psalm 124, and followed by prayers of confession led by the minister. After which absolution is followed by the singing of the Psalms by the congregation. The Psalms that were sung in the service were those that were listed on the chart for the service of the day. Calvin here insisted on the singing of the Ten Commandments though he was not against the singing of the Psalms.

After this a prayer of illumination follows and the exact words for this prayer were left to the preacher's discretion. Thereafter the scripture is read followed by the sermon then offering and prayer of intercession. The Lord's Prayer in long paraphrase and then the Apostles' Creed followed by the Aaronic blessing.

Dyck (2009) states that Calvin's liturgy changed to a certain degree between the time he left Geneva for Strasbourg and the time he revisited Geneva. The two liturgies are compared in the following table:

| Calvin: Strasbourg, 1540 | Calvin: Geneva, 1542 |
|---|---|
| Invocation: Psalm 124:8 | Invocation: Psalm 124:8 |
| Confession of sins | Confession of sins |
| Scriptural words of pardon | Prayer for pardon |
| Absolution | |
| Metrical Decalogue sung with Kyrie elison (Gr.) after each Law | |
| Short prayer for Illumination | Short prayer for Illumination |
| Reading of the Scriptures | Reading of the Scriptures |
| Sermon | Sermon |
| *Liturgy of the Upper Room* | |
| Offering | Offering |
| Prayer of Intercessions | Prayer of Intercessions |
| Lord's Prayer in long Paraphrase | Lord's Prayer in long Paraphrase |
| Preparation of elements | Preparation of elements |
| Apostles' Creed sung | Apostles' Creed sung |
| Consecration Prayer | |
| Words of Institution | Words of Institution |
| Exhortation | Exhortation |
| | Consecration Prayer |
| Fraction | Fraction |
| Delivery | Delivery |
| Communion, while psalm sung | Communion, while psalm or Scriptures read |
| Post-communion collect | Post-communion collect |
| *Nunc dimittis* in metre | |
| Aaronic Blessing | Aaronic Blessing |

According to Calvin liturgy is not worship but a means to worship in an orderly manner, worshiping an orderly God. Though it is known that Calvin's preference was to celebrate communion weekly, when he revisited Geneva the Council commanded that the communion be celebrated quarterly. Now all the components of the above outlined liturgy referring to the Lord's Supper would be omitted for the Sunday services where there was no celebration of the Holy Communion (Dyck 2009: 2).

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### 3.3.3. John Knox

Knox 1514 – 24 November 1572 was the leader of the Protestant Reformation in Scotland and regarded as the founder of the Presbyterian denomination in Scotland. Like many reformers he was subjected to the censure by the Church for denouncing the idolatry of the Roman Church. He became the most representative ambassador in the struggle for the success of the Protestants. After he was ordered to leave Edinburgh, he went to Dundee where he found Protestants fully in charge of the situation and prepared for audacious action (Brown 1895: 4).

Knox led defiance campaigns and through his sermons he taught the Protestants to fully understand their obligation as Christians in regard to the idolatries of the Roman Church. The Protestants understood Knox as saying the Roman Church with its admiration of images, adorable fixtures and sophisticated bureaucrats has no resemblance to the initial Christian Church (Brown 1895: 6).

This resulted in literally removal and destruction of images that were regarded as evocative of idolatry (Brown 1895: 7). These acts of violence against the sacred places of the ancient faith spread throughout Scotland and abroad (Brown 1895: 8).

The tactics of the Regent that created an impression that Protestants concealed themselves behind religion for the over throw of authority led to the writing of the three manifestoes by Knox to counter this propaganda (Brown 1895: 10). He addressed these manifestoes respectively to *"D'Oysel* and the French soldiery, and to the whole body of the Scottish nobility" (Brown 1895: 10).

Brown (1895: 10) states that Knox in his manifesto was declaring that "the Protestants were the most loyal subjects in the country; but liberty of worship was what they were now bent on maintaining, even at the point of the sword". The end to this struggle was not treason, "but simply freedom to worship God according to conscience" (Brown 1895: 12).

All that Knox was advocating was that Protestants should be allowed freedom of worship and stop being compelled into 'the religion of superstitions' and of worshipping idols. He was resolute in this position and warned his people that their success depended on their zeal and determination.

Having lived in Geneva, Knox absorbed the doctrines of Calvinism and transferred them to his native country Scotland. And as a result Calvinism in Scotland was accepted as the national faith. For the Scottish people, Calvinism as a doctrine was "in harmony with the hard realities and the limited scope of their daily life" (Brown 1895: 119).

### 3.3.3.1. Word of God

In disseminating the doctrine of the Protestants the Word of God was central to Knox as it was with other reformers. He condemned idolatries and a superstitious kind of religion in the series of sermons he preached. His call was that religion should be reformed and a perfect freedom of worship be authorised. In almost any situation, Knox produced a corresponding scriptural text to support his standpoint.

### 3.3.3.2. Knox position about the Mass

According to Knox the Mass is not the Lord's Supper. He claims that all religious rituals and customs must have biblical justification if they are to be accepted as valid expressions of worship. He stressed the fact that all worship invented by man is idolatry. He declares that the Mass was so idolatrous and the type of worship that causes disgust before God (Reed 1995: 9).

Knox assertion was that unlike the Lord's Supper which was instituted to be an eternal memory of the benefits we have received by Jesus Christ and his death, Mass is the type of worship that is invented by man. He states that according to the holy command of our Lord

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Jesus Christ in the Lord's Supper the bread is broken and the cup distributed amongst all. But in Mass he contends that the congregation gets nothing except to look and watch whilst one person eats and drinks all.

As ordered by Jesus Christ congregants are equal participants in the Lord's Supper unlike in the Mass where the congregation receives nothing except witnessing the deceptive movements of the celebrant. He argues that the juking, nodding, crossings, turnings and uplifting of the priest in the Mass are nothing but a diabolical deviation of the Lord's Supper. He declares that all these movements of the celebrant in the Mass are nothing but the invention of man.

Like other Reformers Knox believed that Christ's command is that we should all eat of one bread and drink of one cup thereof ourselves and not look and watch whist one bows, jukes, turns, nods, eats and drinks alone. For when we eat and drink at the table of our Lord he trusted, we openly confess the fruits and virtues of Christ's body, of his blood and passion, to relate to us; and that we are members of his mystical body; and that God the Father is satisfied with us and accepts our iniquities, notwithstanding our first corruption and present frailties. Reed (1995) states the Knox believed that "in the Supper of the Lord, partakers humbly do confess themselves redeemed only by Christ's blood, which once was shed. In the Mass, the priest vaunts himself to make a sacrifice for the sins of the quick and the dead".

However all partakers in the Lord's Supper sit at one table with no difference in vestments between the congregation and the minister. They together confer and confess themselves as defaulters unto God, unable to refer thanks for the benefits which they have received from his liberality whereas in the Mass, "the priest alleges that God is a debtor to him, and unto all them for whom he makes that sacrifice" (Reed 1995).

Knox's position therefore was that any form of worship set up without authority from God is outrageous and a disgust before God. Mass is such a type of worship which is blasphemous to Christ's death, an idolatrous and an abomination before God. He emphatically stressed that

anything that is done to the honour or service of God not warranted by God's word is tantamount to disobedience (Reed 1995).

Knox once called out when defending himself before a Council in England; "O God Eternal! Hast thou laid none other burden upon our backs than Jesus Christ laid by His Word? Then who hath burdened us with all these ceremonies, prescribed fasting, compelled chastity, unlawful vows, invocations of saints, with the idolatry of the Mass? The Devil, the Devil, brethren, invented all these burdens to depress imprudent men to perdition. . ." (Melhuis 2006: 59).

### 3.3.3.3. Music

According to Knox worship is a communal activity but the Roman Catholic Church kept worshipers away from being involved in worship. As the gospel was proclaimed with simplicity psalms were also synchronised to well-known melodies in order to make it easier for people to express praise and thanks to God Almighty (Kleyn 2000).

Knox therefore supported music in worship and wanted that it be used for the benefit of glorifying and praising God the Creator by the people.

### 3.3.3.4. Knox Liturgical Order of Service

Knox's conviction was that man is not able to create or invent a religion that is acceptable to God, but is obligated to conform to and conserve the religion that is received from God without any fabrication. This view addresses the fundamental question concerning the power of the Church with regard to the development of liturgy.

According to Knox the church has no power to devise or forge ceremonies to augment God's services in the name of developing liturgy. He condemned the Church of Rome for the

falsification of worship and laid out proper, biblical liturgy and worship. He developed and applied one of the *solas* of Reformation *viz. sola scriptura,* that Scripture alone must be the guide for worship (Kleyn 2000).

The power of the church has limits. The church ought to do things in faith and expressed by the Word of God. Anything in the liturgy that is not warranted by the scriptures is a mere anecdote in the eyes of God (Thin 1985: 95).

Knox through his sermons set forth a biblical way of worship. He wrote the Book of Common Order, referred to as "Knox's Liturgy." This book was approved and adopted by the General Assembly in 1564 and used in Scotland until the Westminster directory for worship appeared in 1645 (Klein 2001: 81).

Knox's liturgical order of service was not different from the form of liturgy that was used in the English congregations at Geneva in 1556. He was influenced by Calvin's theology and his understanding of church polity. As he interacted with Calvin in Geneva (Klein 2001), Knox learned from him and became conversant with his point of view on worship.

Knox adopted Calvin's viewpoints on worship, totally convinced that they were biblical, factual and faithful. He fathomed that man may not decide how God is worshiped. God alone defines how he must be worshipped. Therefore any practice or religious ceremony in the church that does not have scriptural affirmation must be rejected. Making reference to Deuteronomy 4: 2, Knox states that: "Do not add to what I command you and do not subtract from it, but keep the commands of the Lord your God that I give you."

There were a variety of prayers that form part of Knox's liturgy. These prayers were premeditated for use during worship services. However Knox made it very clear that in a public worship service there must also be room for free prayers. To a lager degree ministers were free to use or not to use these prayers in their worship service. These premeditated prayers were just models and ministers were not rigorously obligated to use them.

## 3.4. In Conclusion

Having described the convictions of the above early reformers, one can conclude that the Reformed tradition is the Presbyterian way of being a Christian. The Presbyterian form of worship may vary from one context to another. In spite of this there are fundamental emphases that have traditionally branded Presbyterian worship. The most important of all is that the Reformed or Presbyterian worship is a Word-centred liturgy as set out by the early fathers of the Reformation. The whole reformation progression was based on the teachings of the Bible. These fathers professed that: "The holy Christian Church, whose only head is Christ, is born from the word of God and abides in the word and hears not the voice of strangers" (Avis 1981: 81).

The Presbyterian Church therefore as an institutional manifestation of the Reformed tradition, assumes that the Scripture is the word of God to the world (the church and every human being) through the Holy Spirit. It asserts the lordship of Jesus Christ on earth and in the church, and the Christological nature of her theology. It is through Jesus Christ that we have faith in God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit (Weaver Jr. 2002: 32).

In worship God and man are connected on an emotional and personal level. Pieterse (2013: 3) states that "there is an existential participation between God and human beings". He argues that this partaking is not only cause to transmit the relationship between God and man, but also to express the relationship between human beings themselves. Wepener (2009: 21) describes this participation in worship as "the double movement within the liturgy, in which God and man encounter one another and communicate in a reciprocal symbolic way with each other". He therefore means this when he proposes that; "liturgy is the encounter between God and man in which God and man move out towards one another, a movement in which God's action has primacy, so that in a theonomic reciprocal fashion a dialogical communication in and through rituals and symbols is established in which man participate in a bodily way and can in this way reach his highest goal in life, namely to praise God and enjoy Him forever" (Wepener 2009: 21).

The central characteristic of the Reformed or Presbyterian worship is that Worship is primarily for God (Weaver Jr. 2002: 33). Everything else is secondary to this belief. Virtually without any disagreement we gain immensely when we worship; we enjoy fellowship and are recharged spiritually, but this is not the primary purpose of worship. Such horizontal actions are secondary to the vertical activities between worshipers and God. The primary purpose of Christian worship is to praise the Almighty in Christ Jesus for what He has done for us (Weaver Jr. 2002: 2). It is God who is worshipped; praised, adored and glorified in Christian worship. Worship is for God's glory not our glory or the church's glory. Congregants are engaged in worship as participants not as spectators and this was crucial to Calvin's aim to reform the Church. "The liturgy is something that we go to church, come together as the church, not to watch but to do" (Weaver Jr. 2002: 30).

Christianity is a well- defined comprehensive way of life which touches on every element but centres on the worship of God the Creator. When worshipers worship they humble themselves and submit that God is the most powerful God and they are inconsequential and feeble without Him. Through the Holy Spirit worshipers earn personal fulfilment in worship and rise above what they are because of whom they worship who is their fountain of unlimited strength. When we worship the concentration is not so much on what we get but on glorifying God the Creator. "We do this work of liturgy, first of all, not for ourselves but for God" (Weaver Jr. 2002: 30).

The other distinctive characteristic of the Reformed worship is that it is identified by order and dignity. The Reformed worship is a group conversation with God. Men meet God in the worship conversation and they both speak and listen to each other. They participate in this conversation in an orderly and dignified manner. When one speaks the other one listens. Much as we are not compelled to use the Service Book, we are also not free to do as we please. Unlike other traditions namely, Roman Catholics and Anglicans who are compelled to the prescribed liturgy, Presbyterians are free to use or not to use the Service Book. For example we are not obliged to say the same prayers, hymns and Bible readings that are in the Service Book. There is room for innovation. But that freedom is not as it is in the Free Church tradition (Weaver Jr. 2002: 30).

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This liturgical freedom of the Presbyterian Church is not unlimited but is applied within the bounds of the orders of the General Assembly for worship. The Assembly sets some guidelines for governing the content and conduct of worship but these guidelines are not rigid as in the Roman and Anglican traditions and also not open and free as in the free tradition. These guidelines of the Presbyterian worship are anchored in the order and decorum God the Creator as He is the order and not chaos.

**Chapter 4: Transformative Power of Liturgy**

"Change never comes easily, and it never comes without a price,...we resist it, even when the old is no longer working, because any change….threatens our sense of stability and security" (Weaver Jr. J. 2002:4).

### 4.1. Introduction

In this chapter the researcher explores the potential of the transformative power of liturgy in the process of unification and in the Church in general and also considers the meaningful role of ritual in bringing transformation. To begin with we examine the significance of worship in the life of the Church with special attention given to the transformative power of liturgy. Later in the chapter we also look at how this transformative power of liturgy can improve and/or even change worship for the better.

Jones (1992:6) refers to the work of Aida Kavanagh who views liturgy as "the *theologia prima* which 'grounds' the *theologia secunda*." This means that liturgy is theology made by a liturgical community and it is manifested in the Church's historical rituals – '*lex orandi*'. "It recognises that the liturgical community does genuine theology, although admittedly of a primary and not secondary kind, and it recognises that the law of prayer establishes the Church's law of belief" (Fagerberg 2004:7). Endeavours for liturgical renewal therefore must arise out of the tradition of the Church instead of our individual preferences.

With this opinion in mind one is persuaded to postulate that the true splendour of the glorification of God is to be realised in the liturgy not the other way round. Crichton in Jones et al (1992: 6) affirms that belief is as a result of an encounter with the Fountainhead of the blessings of the grace of faith.

In order to investigate in more detail the power of liturgy and the manner in which it can enhance the unity of the church, this chapter will specifically look at the significance of

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worship in the life of the Church, Transformative power of ritual and Liturgy as an all-embracing instrument of worship.

## 4.2. The Significance of worship in the life of the Church

It is relevant to this work to start by defining the Church before one can attempt to define the significance of worship in the life of the Church.

'What is Church?'

The Psalmist defines the gathered faith community as the great assembly "I will thank you in the great assembly; among throngs of people I will praise you" (Psalm 35: 18). The Psalmist describes the Church as the assembly of the children of the Most High congregated by God. Additional to this, the Psalmist also claims that this assembly is presided over by God Himself seated in the heavenly council (Psalm 82: 1). This is the nature of the Church.

Chupungco (2010: 128) concurs with this assertion by articulating that the Church is "the assembly that God has gathered from every corner of the world". He expands that the Church is a called and gathered assembly by God, "it now calls out and gathers the entire world, so that as a great assembly of all the peoples on earth it may give God thanks and praise. The Church is "called out" and "calls out"; it is gathered and gathers" (Chupungco 2010: 128).

The baptism that these called and gathered people have received in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit makes them to be a special people above all people. "From all the peoples on earth, the Lord chose them to be His own people", His elect, a royal priesthood, God's chosen ones and what Moses calls a kingdom of priests, because they belong to God the Most High to witness Christ to the world. This is the identity of the Church; this is who and what the church is: "a priestly community, which, when celebrating the Eucharist, most fully realizes its identity as the Body of Christ in the world" (Francis 2000: 2).

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The Presbyterian view advocates the supremacy of the Word but within the supremacy of the Word there is Sacrament. Hence Calvin would never encourage the administration of the Sacrament without the Word. The Word and Sacrament are at par hence ministers in the Presbyterian tradition are ordained in the ministry of Word and Sacrament (Presbyterian Catechism).

Furthermore these gathered and  called people unite in a Christian worship service to celebrate the life, death, resurrection and glorification of Christ by confessing and affirming that Christ is the Lord (Cilliers 2010: 5). In the same vein Muller quotes Wolterstorff who recommends that the other factor that makes the Christian church so distinct is its obligation in the Christian liturgy "and that liturgy and justice …meant somehow to interact with each other, expressing and nourishing each other… The Church is to gather for the celebration of the liturgy, and when it is dispersed is to practise and to struggle for justice and to spread the Word about its Lord" (2006: 643).

The practical desired objective and goals of the Christian worship service is to drive away *Ongendawo* meaning the devil, his influences and his army. This is *praxis* in accordance with reformed Christian faith (Barnard and Wepener 2012: 2). Supplementary to this, Barnard and Wepener suggest that "liturgy has also a cognitive target, *viz.* 'a certain knowledge whereby I hold for truth all that God has revealed unto us in his word.'… The knowledge, which the liturgy aims at, is meaningless if not the Holy Spirit alleviates the knowledge of the gospel to faith and trust in the grace of Jesus Christ that in turn result in Christian diaconal acting" (2012: 2).

'Then, what is the significance of worship in the life of the Church?'

As it has been explained in the previous chapter that worship is primarily for God, liturgy then becomes an activity by which this 'called and gathered' community worships God (cf. Making 2001: 30). Crichton in (Jones 1992: 7) reminds us of Aristotle's axiom that "man is a social animal". Erickson (1985: 470) also declares that "There is a sense in which one is not truly human except when functioning within a social group, for although he may have

developed social skills, unless he is actually exercising them, he is not fulfilling his end or *telos*." In agreeing with both Aristotle's adage and Erickson's declaration, Long makes a profound declaration about human beings that: "we need to join with others in bowing before God in worshipful acts of devotion, praise, obedience, thanksgiving, and petition" (2001: 17).

Long explains further that "What is more, when all clutter is cleared away from our lives, we truly want to worship in communion with others. All of us know somewhere in our hearts that we are not whole without such worship and we hunger to engage in that practice" (2001: 17). Saliers says this style of communal worship of partaking in common actions constitutes a kind of pious identity and a cultural embodied form of life where people of God sing, praise, pray, share the Word of God, and celebrate a holy meal etc. together. He further argues that worship therefore takes into consideration the social, cultural, and psychological facets of intrinsic practices and the community's means of participation (cf. Saliers 2012: 291). This explains the reason why Christians perform communal worship. Public worship therefore is as a result of the fact that men are societal in nature. It is therefore normal for the Church to show communally its temperament in worship.

Interconnected with this argument is that Christian worship is the divine act and essentially the work of God for His people. God is sovereign in all areas of our lives. He is the prime mover, and when we worship as Christians we respond to the mystery of His being, presence and self-communication (cf. Saliers 2012: 289) and also treasure our reverence for God. Worship is the religious sensation supplemented by the sacred mysterious and invisible transcendent (cf. Jones 1992: 7). It is the primary and indispensable basis of the Church, a discourse between God and His people.

Worship is a sacred public occurrence through which we encounter God in an unfathomable accomplishment. It is an event through which the people or community meet in holy mystery as active participants willing to respond to God's invitation. Worship is God's noble gift to the Church. It is the gift that the Church cannot survive without. Through worship the people come to God's presence with open hands and hearts "in the context of a given place and time – in a given culture" (Francis 2000: 20).

When defining public worship Barnard makes reference to Schleiermacher's opinion that: "Public worship is a union of individuals, that constitutes a Christian parish and that occupies a particular space" (Barnard 2001: 187). Based on this claim and also on Schleiermacher's contemplation of what culture is to worship, Barnard believes that worship must embrace people and their culture. According to Saliers, worship is a tradition which guides our ethical practices, "providing aesthetic and mystical experience, and generating reflective theories of practice in every period and socio-cultural context" (Saliers 2012: 289).

Worship is a ritual event or action that exhibits religious devotion. Through this ritual action people are transfigured into the *ekklesia* of God, the Church of God that is summoned to worship him. Chupungco claims that the word *ekklesia* holds the idea "of a public assembly that is summoned regularly to discuss the affairs of the state" (2010: 129). He maintains that "public or liturgical worship is essential to the definition of the Church" (2010: 129).

Martin (2011: 42) argues that "This transformative drama used common but essential elements: water, candles, and coloured fabrics that protected members' bodies, and a Eucharist that protected their spiritual lives." He further claims that "a Christian sacramental imagination is produced and shaped in the way simple ritual acts ("taking", "blessing", "breaking", "sharing") involving ordinary things (bread, wine, and water) and done through the agency of ordinary people (the gathered community called "church") in response to the command of Christ (1 Cor 11: 23-26), transfigures these ordinary things, making them extraordinary (the body and blood of Christ). As they participate in these acts, the people are themselves transfigured into something extraordinary (the body of Christ, the *ekklesia* of God). And the place where this action happens is also transformed into the meeting place of heaven and earth, the navel of the world, the temple of the living God" (Martin 2011: 42-43). Wepener (2013: 3) also adheres to this concept of using ordinary physical material in worship to show the mystical facts of life.

For the reason that human beings are insubstantial in nature God uses ordinary physical material things to strengthen and nourish our faith. Oslon cites Banvinck who asserts that "Because we are not disembodied spirits but sensuous earthly creatures who can only

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understand spiritual things when they come to us in humanly perceptible forms, God instituted the sacraments in order that by seeing those signs we might gain a better insight into his benefits, receive a stronger confirmation of his promises, and thus be supported and strengthened in our faith." (2006: 29)

In other words worship cannot be outlined or constrained into location. Neither can it be restricted to any particular action or context. Worship employs every method and expression available to humankind; be it language, movement, sound, music, art, colour and all kinds of gifts that God had given to His people. It uses all these ordinary physical materials and transform them to be extraordinary and the place from wherever the people of God meet for worship is also transformed to become "the city of God in the midst of the city of this world" (Martin 2001: 43). Chupungco (2010: 129) recites the declaration in Liturgy Constitution that "Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the Priest and of his Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others; no other action of the Church can equal its effectiveness by the same title and to the same degree".

Worship is highly significant in our lives as Christians because it is our drive and it prepares us for the eschatological worldview. In other words it is an all- embracing phenomenon which charges people to merge towards a mutual purpose and destination without contesting their past but "reach out in our own life-stories to the external Story of Life" (Grainger 2009: 44).

## 4.3. Transformative power of ritual

The fundamental importance of Christian worship is faithfulness. "Through authentic worship communities of human beings express qualities associated with the Divine and are in turn shaped by them" (Saliers 2012: 290). As it has been referred to in this work the mystical reality of Christian worship is to encounter God, ritual therefore enables the profound manner in which we can interrelate with God. Ritual is the inherent characteristic of religion (cf. Grainger 2009: 77) and the underpinning stimulus of anthropology. "When it speaks, it speaks

of itself. It witnesses to its own reality and truthfulness – which is to say that it speaks to us of God, for it is in the rite that we become aware of God as he acts in the world of men and women, God as he is *for us*" (Grainger 2009: 77). "Ritual serves as a way of meaningfully interacting with God, to bring about a transformation or change the state of the world in some way, generally concerning the immaterial (e.g. sin and impurity)" (Hundley 2011: 20).

Ritual has with it an incredible power and conceivable hope for redemption which creates a possibility for people to forsake their selves and submit to its inspiration. Ritual takes an unusual and special variety and mixture of shapes and forms. It is often performed in different places and situations like religious and or communal settings. It is also performed under different circumstances such as in privacy; habitually with and or without fixed and repeated sequences of symbolic actions. The main reason for people to engage in ritual actions is to achieve a set of desired outcomes for instance ending doubt, reducing their anxiety by boosting their confidence, easing their grief etc. Rituals are pragmatic and useful symbolic acts that encompass support and bring about the development of culture and religion. Barnard and Wepener discern liturgical ritual carrying evidence "of the ideological or cognitive, social-ethical, aesthetical and psychological qualities of religion and has functional purpose with regard to these domains" (2012: 4). Rituals are manifest and unavoidable elements of culture, wide-ranging from social daily practises to the innermost virtues of our customs. Through ritual people access the complexity and the deepness of their minds, hearts and souls. "They make complex ideas, the divine and the immaterial practical and accessible" (Hundley 2011: 21).

When rituals don't exist the inborn desire of human beings becomes restless, unsatisfied, bored, divided and indifferent and the result for this is unstableness because of the moral breakdown. The transformative power of ritual is realised when we search and open up our hearts and our ethics. Ritual is a tool that human beings use to emancipate and vent their feelings and also build their personal identity. It serves as a mirror which abets people to understand and appreciate who they are and also to know who they are not. Ritual is the general quality of human societal being. It is through ritual symbolic actions not its words that people are able to bring significance to abstract elements of faith, tranquillity to turmoil and

also "a direct presentation of religious reality" (Grainger 2009: 77-78). Ritual brings into being true transformation and build significance, essence and consistency to the lives of people. When in this state, people are channelled and rerouted to an encounter with God their Creator (cf. Grainger 2009: 3).

In other words, ritual links the two worlds, the anthropological and celestial dominions. Ritual gives an abstract a real form and makes complicated and concealed ideas and beliefs; the divine and immaterial, realistic and comprehensible (cf. Hundley 2011: 20 -22). According to Wepener rituals "are powerful 'rites of passage', pointing to a transition from the ordinary to the spiritual sphere, even from death to life, nourishing the day-to-day life of the individual and his or her community by acting on the different levels of being human" (2013: 3).

Furthermore ritual is a locus of connection between the unconnected worlds - the ordinary and the abstract, between human and divine, realistic and immaterial. Hundley (2011: 21) argues based on the usefulness and undefinable character of ritual that "It simultaneously enacts transformations in two different realms, drawing from each to make something unnatural to both." In order to accomplish this ritual uses mundane physical material, occurrences, ordinary customs and traditions based in culture and worldviews in order to signify spiritual realities and the mystery of life in general (cf. Wepener 2013: 3).

Post like Grimes raises the element of location as an emphasis in the modern ritual studies (cf. Post 2005:214). His argument is that ritual is strongly related to location such as situations in which cultural rites are practised e.g. funerals, memorial ceremonies (such as tomb stone unveiling, remembrance rituals, mourning ritual; like removal or growing of hairs and *ukubuyisa* – a ritual done at least a year after the loss or burial of a loved one), graduation ceremonies, birthday parties etc. Related with this aspect of location is also the factor of domains or zones because rituals are always associated with settings or domains (cf. Post 2005: 214). The crux of the matter is that ritual grows and enhances stability to community and reinforces social bonds through the sharing of meaningful practices.

Basically rituals are not just dependent on words but on the transforming symbolic actions of lived life (cf. Grainger 2009: 78). "It is these actions, the human experiences of change and growth that are recognised and validated by our encounter with God in the Christian sacraments" (Grainger 2009: 78). Oosterhuis puts it very clearly that words and language alone are not enough to explain who God is because he is an absolute undefinable Being (cf. Vernooij 2002: 50-51). Liturgical rituals therefore delimited by prayers, songs and preaching become the language with which we use to define, communicate, commit and surrender ourselves to God Almighty.

The gestures of praying before a meal, before and after waking up, in times of grief, the gestures of breaking bread, lifting and sharing the cup, anointing and washing, sprinkling or splashing others dipping in water, laying of hands etc., are the ritual liturgical language that proclaims who we are and whom do we follow (cf. Vernooij 2002: 57-59). These gestures are a clear pronouncement of the consecrating presence of God and our gratefulness towards Him. Though words can sometimes be misinterpreted, these ritual actions cannot be mistaken because their real meaning symbolise and show "a glory which cannot be directly accommodated within human awareness" (Grainger 2009: 24).

## 4.4 Liturgy as an all-embracing instrument of worship

Francis (2000: 20) declares that "Liturgy, as the public worship of the church, celebrates who we are and who we are called to be because of God's love for us in Jesus Christ." He further states that "our common worship expresses our identity as God's people, redeemed by Christ's suffering, death and resurrection (Francis 2000: 20). Liturgy endeavours to liberate Christians from their captivity of culture and social class to the primary purpose of the Church which is to worship God to whom we owe reverence of honour, praise, adoration and thanksgiving. It is therefore "a statement of truth which breaks our rules of procedures and consequently lifts us out of ourselves to share in what lies beyond us – and to do it now" (Grainger 2009: 1).

Liturgy is an act with transformative power which involves the diverse people present in the service and transmutes them into co-subjects connected on an emotional and personal level with God. To the context of the UPCSA this transformative power of liturgy would transfigure the members of the denomination from both backgrounds of the former churches (privileged and disadvantaged, wealthy and indigent) into co-subjects mutually animated on a personal level with Christ in the new Church. The Church of God is made up of the heterogeneous people who come from every level of society and are gathered together for the purpose of giving glory to God who surpasses every human classification. To the same degree Pecklers notes that: "the liturgical assembly offered no special treatment for the privileged elite since Christian initiation was the great equalizer" (Francis & Pecklers 2000: 50).

Liturgy transforms the individual congregants from being onlookers into worshipers who participate in a worship service connected with God and other worshippers on a personal and emotional level. When worshipers come to church, they are not like theatregoers who pack up the gallery and become spectators who watch the exhibited work from a distance. Instead they become the assembly which participates in the sacrifices of our Lord Jesus Christ by becoming the voices, the hands and the feet of our Lord's saving sacrament (cf. Chupungco 2010: 130-134). The transformative power of liturgy creates an environment in a church service that makes everyone present involved. Worshipers are not attending the church service with subjective different objects from the leader of the service to observe and understand.

As it has been alluded to the fact that worship is a Christian discourse between God and the congregation, liturgy therefore becomes an instrument to facilitate this discourse with both verbal and nonverbal communication. Pecklers (2003: 6) observes that liturgy is about ritual and nonverbal wherein the meaning is discovered in the action. Though Vernooij is basing his argument on 'Music as liturgical sign', he depicts the reverence of liturgy "as an artwork which takes place in time and space, and which does not present itself to us as a collection of separate, successive units of text and action, but as one united whole" (2002: 1). This declaration is true for the liturgy in general.

When one looks to the origin and the development of the word liturgy, one discovers that the idea of service is key to the narrative description of liturgy. Chupungco (2010: 51) defines liturgy as a service offered by the Church to the people. He argues that even in the circumstances where people are trapped by poverty, misery and suffering, the liturgy "should be a convincing sign to the community that while dignity in poverty and noble simplicity are exalted Christian values, all must work toward the eradication of human misery. The liturgy is the service, which the Church of the poor offers to the poor" (2010: 55).

In support of his affirmation Chupungco cites the shortened proclamation of John Chrysostom found in the Office of Readings for Saturday of the Twenty-First Week in Ordinary Times:

> "Do you want to honour Christ's body? Then do not scorn him in his nakedness, nor honour him here in the church with silken garment while neglecting him outside where he is cold and naked. For he who said: This is my body, also said: You saw me hungry and did not feed me. A gift to the church may be taken as a form of ostentation, but an alms is pure kindness. Of what use is it to weigh down Christ's table with golden cups, when he himself is dying of hunger? First, fill him when he is hungry; then use the means you have left to adorn his table. What is the use of providing the table with cloths woven of gold threads, and not providing Christ himself with the clothes he needs? What if you were to see him clad in worn-out rags and stiff from the cold, and were to forget about clothing him and instead were to set up golden columns for him, saying that you were doing it in honour? Would he not think he was being mocked and greatly insulted? I am not forbidding you to supply these adornments; I am urging you to provide these other things as well, and indeed to provide them first. Do not therefore adorn the church and ignore your afflicted brothers and sisters, for they are the most precious temple of all" (2010: 55).

Chupungco contends that even in those communities and settings that are opulent the liturgy should maintain its character and not meld with its comfortable ambiances. He declares that: "Even in rich churches and prosperous communities the priest must pour water into the cup of wine to convey the basic option of the Church to serve the poor and be counted among the

poor" (2010: 56). Liturgy therefore signifies service and all those who are involved in the liturgical celebration should be mindful of the fact that it is for the "assembled community", "Christ's faithful" (Chupungco 2010: 59).

Donghi on the other hand describes liturgy as a "complex of sensible and efficacious signs" that are symbolised presently in the Church of the immeasurable acts of God in history (cf. Donghi 1997: v). He upholds to the fact that these immeasurable acts of God have their preamble in the Old Testament and their completeness in Christ. Our objective and our essential need as Christians when we worship is to encounter God and this is our underlying distinctiveness as worshippers. Liturgy therefore becomes the medium with which the Church invites God to give blessing and authority to speak and intervene on His behalf.  Equally so through worship God gathers His people into His sanctified relationship and "their liturgical participation is a response to that holy invitation" (Pecklers 2003: 23).

Grainger (2009: 2) puts it clearly that for us to encounter God "we must be changed in the attitude of our hearts and minds and in the message conveyed by our actions." This is the actual purpose and authenticity of liturgy and this is the reason why we perform it in the least. Liturgy is not the lone *modus operandi* in which we encounter God. It is an action in which we partake being aware of God's intention "to transform us by leading us away from ourselves in a very specific and practical way" (cf. Grainger 2009: 3). Without any doubt therefore liturgy is an amenable and subjective intentional reactive deed on our part. Then during the process liturgy collaborates with our (the people's) culture, transforming it while in the process is itself being transformed (cf. Francis 2000: 42). Liturgy acknowledges, absorbs and makes sacred some aspects of nature and human cultures by bestowing on them the nobility of the new heaven and the new earth in the incarnate Son of God, Jesus Christ.

 It then requires a church that is not hypersensitive and touchy to transformation to adapt and integrate these changes to formulate a liturgical expression of faith that will embrace the culture/s of the context in which it exists. For the church to be able to execute this it requires leadership that is devoted and sincere to the unity of the church. A leadership that absolutely comprehends that the obligation of the church is not to protect their personal interests but

make visible and accessible what Chupungco terms "the priestly office of Christ" (cf. Chupungco 2010: 134). Liturgy therefore is the ecclesiastical of Jesus Christ and for this reason the whole body of Christ, the complete body of Christ becomes the fundamental nucleus of the liturgy.

Having outlined the transformative power of liturgy one must also allude to the fact that liturgy has some handicaps that affect the Church negatively. It can undoubtedly be manipulated for self- interest. The powerful privileged in the Church can exploit liturgy and employ it as a tool to maintain control and dominance over others. It can be used to frustrate others in the Church. This can be accomplished by creating an environment that doesn't permit or give any space for the dominant system to be changed or challenged. If it is challenged the manoeuvring methods as it happens are applied to suppress the views of others people but maintain and strengthen the status quo (cf. Stringer 2005: 90). This unfortunately obstructs the church from executing its duty as an institution on earth that must continue with the mission that was started on the cross.

The other disadvantage of liturgy is that it can be used out of context without any visible significant effects to the lives of the people. It can just be a tool that is used for worship which brings no joy to our Lord Jesus Christ. Our belief is that when we gather for worship the incarnate Son of God is always present and inviting us to his holy presence. Our liturgical participation therefore should be the medium to acknowledge God's mighty acts on us and make us  remember our own identity as Christ's body in this world and our destiny thereof (2003: 30-31).

### 4.5. Conclusion

To conclude, liturgy breathes life into worshippers who through ritual actions reaffirm their faith to Christ and mature profoundly in significance, worth and power of shared witness. Liturgical rites carry us to where the word cannot go to the secret inner kingdom and

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anchoring us to a centre while freeing us to move on and confront the everlasting unpredictability of life (cf. Grainger 2009: 61).

For the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa to fulfil its union and purpose as the Church it has to draw the unifying liturgy that gives honour and glory to God by celebrating its union in the unity of the Trinity. It is a grievous mistake to simply ignore the past thinking that it will just be forgotten without addressing it. The history of UPCSA had greatly been affected by the history of South Africa which is marked by a cycle of atrocities, oppression, division, antagonistic laws and systems, victory of democracy, unemployment, hunger and homelessness. The UPCSA like any Church in SA is surely affected by the political history of our country. To move forward as the UPCSA we need to come up with a liturgy that will unite the people and draws from the experience of members of both former denominations who through decades were separated by the political laws of our country.

The UPCSA needs a liturgy that can transform all its being to expand from its life experiences to the divine life experience. We need a liturgy that can strengthen and unite us in concentrating on our connection with God and fellowship with one another. The mystical objective of liturgy is to give reverence; honour and glory to God and also to transform us increasingly into the Body of His incarnate Son and put into practise the meaning of our conversion.

In this regard the transformative power of liturgy can be a useful tool for the Church in the process of unification. As we worship and practise common rituals together, the transformative power of liturgy will draw us towards the full visible unity of the church. The things that separate and separated us will be transformed to conform to the likeness of Christ. Then we will look very different and become a Church that is truly united and ONE. Things that were so familiar to us will now be transformed and be different.

# CHAPTER 5: EMPIRICAL FINDINGS ON THE ROLE OF LITURGY IN THE PROCESS OF UNIFICATION

"It seems that the end of all things will be discovered in the beginning of all things" (Munroe 2010: 24).

## 5.1 Introduction

In this chapter the researcher presents the narratives of the interviewees, his interpretive analysis, the results and the findings of the study. As explained in chapter two the qualitative line of approach incorporating both an anthropological and theological approach in order to establish how the rituals of the UPCSA is employed, "their reception, appropriation and how they are experienced by the believers, as well as on the relation with their cultural context, with which they are in constant interaction" (Post 2001: 13).

This empirical study is conducted using qualitative inquiry through participant's observation, questionnaires and interviews (cf. Salkind 2010: 1161) to discover the narrative characteristics of life experienced by individuals during and after the process of unification in the UPCSA. The main reason for this is to determine the present state of affairs and opinions in relation to the unifying liturgical rituals in the UPCSA (cf. Ritchie *et al.*, 2014: 270). In actual fact this is the descriptive form of the researcher's study which forms part of what Osmer (2008) calls the descriptive-empirical task of Practical Theology. In achieving this, the researcher applied some of the research techniques which are relevant to this particular research in order to be able to document the comprehensive narratives of experiences of individuals involved in the research.

This approach helped the researcher to apply a method that would enable him to move from a 'thin description' to 'thick descriptions' and techniques which assisted him to record the detailed accounts of what interviewees have experienced during and after the process of unification in the UPCSA. "Thick descriptions entail highly detailed accounts of what has

been experienced in the field, so that one interaction can cover a number of pages of 'thick description' and the analysis of the interaction can be a very complex exercise" (Wepener 2009: 27).

## 5.2 Data Collection

In collecting data the researcher made use of both participants' observation and semi-structured interviews techniques (cf. Thumma 1998: 203-208) which some were recorded. The researcher attended worship services both as a participant and an observer in order to learn what congregants are doing so that he can understand why they are doing it (cf. Denny & Wepener 2013). Collecting past stories of the congregations leads to the factual – experimental task (cf. Osmer 2008).

### 5.2.1 Participatory observation

Participatory observation encompasses ethnography which covers the study of people in their natural setting by observing analytically and keeps record of their interactions, routines and rituals in order to understand their cultural norms, beliefs, and behaviour (cf. Lloyd, Steven and Tovey 2010: 22). As stated in chapter two this approach is applied in this research using the core tasks of Practical Theological Interpretation of Osmer (2008) *viz.* the descriptive-empirical, interpretive, normative and pragmatic tasks. These tasks helped the researcher to answer three questions that guide his analysis and response to the UPCSA situation and these questions are:

What is going on?

Why is this going on?

What ought to be going on?

Adding to this opinion Wepener (2009: 23) on the other hand considers participatory observation as central right through the whole process of theologising in the field of theology/liturgy.

It is argued that by applying participatory observation in ritual event worship one puts him/herself in a better position to be able to access two sources of knowledge i.e. the practice of the worshipping community and the unspoken or silent knowledge (cf. Lloyd, Steven and Tovey 2010: 22). This was also the aim of the research conducted for this chapter.

## 5.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

In order to be able to draw the interviewees' narrative personal experiences and social relation, the researcher employed semi-structured types of interviews. Rubin and Rubin (2012: 3) submits that when researchers use in-depth qualitative interviews talking to those who have knowledge of or experience with the research question of interest and through such interviews they examine in detail the experiences, motives and views of others and learn to see the world from viewpoints other than their own. This in-depth interview is described by Kvale and Brinkman (2009) as a form of conversation and they seem to agree with Webb and Webb who describe this method of interview as being "conversation with a purpose" (1932: 130).

Furthermore, as per Kvale and Brinkman (2009) there are two conflicting views in relation to the manner in which knowledge is constructed in the interview *viz.* interviewee's pre-existing knowledge or knowledge formed and bargained in the interview. In justifying this view two allegories are used.

(a) The interviewer as a miner:

> Knowledge is understood as buried metal and interviewer is a miner who unearths the valuable metal. The knowledge is waiting in the subject's interior to be uncovered, uncontaminated by the miner. The interviewer digs nuggets of knowledge out of a subject's pure experiences, unpolluted by any leading questions (Kvale and Brinkman 2009: 48).

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(b) The interviewer as a traveller:

> The interviewer-traveler, in line with the original Latin meaning of conversation as 'wandering together with', walks along with the local inhabitants, asking questions and encouraging them to tell their own stories of their lived world…The journey may not only lead to new knowledge; the traveler may change as well. The journey might instigate a process of reflection that leads the traveler to new ways of self –understanding (Kvale and Brinkman 2009: 48).

This opinion is in harmony with Holstein and Gubrium (cf. 2004 and 2011) who also believe that knowledge in an interview is constructed through alliance between the interviewee and the interviewer calling the research encounter an 'active interview'.

## 5.3 The Selection of Interviewees

As stated in the first chapter, the researcher interviewed five ministers of the UPCSA i.e. three black ministers who were nurtured in the RPCSA  and two white ministers from PCSA upbringing, this was cautiously done grounded on trust and also on the fact that both former denominational categories would be given the same questions. It was very important to build trust and confidence between the researcher and the interviewees in order to remove the barriers that could obstruct interviewees from participating in this research.

This trust and confidence was also imperative in allaying suspicions of the interviewees who some of them regard themselves as the losers and some as the minority in the unity. The researcher therefore had to be very careful in his approach and take into consideration the worldviews of the interviewees and respect their dignity. The purpose for giving moral ethical consideration to the interviewees is to reduce the uncertainty and make a truthful and trustworthy relationship especially that the researcher may be perceived by some as not being neutral. "In sum, the relationship between the knower and the known is made less obscure and perhaps "safer" when researchers practice reflexivity and take steps to ensure that ethical consideration is given to their participants' needs" (Alvermann 2000, November).

On the other hand it had been emphatically stated that in the end our partialities are constantly framed with defects and discrepancies (cf. Haraway 1991: 193). Alvermann (2000, November) argues that "narrative approaches are no more susceptible to problems of self-deception than are other forms of research". Suitably Nespor and Barbe (1995: 53) concisely assert that "No one is detached or neutral". Similarly Wepener (2009: 21) quotes Lukken who states that "A total objective researcher is not possible" and further states that such a researcher is not desirable.

Another aspect considered by the researcher on the selection of the interviewees was to identify people who are experienced and were part of the former denominations, the process of unification and are still members of the UPCSA. The purpose is to get in depth narratives from the people who some of them were in the forefront in the implementation of the resolutions of the former denominations in relation to the formation of the UPSCA.

## 5.4 Interviews

### 5.4.1 The approach

After my Supervisor was satisfied with the research question and the research proposal for this study was approved by the Research as well as Ethics Committees of the Faculty of Theology of the University of Pretoria, I asked for permission from the office of the General Secretary of the UPCSA to be allowed to embark on this study. The permission was granted by the GS on behalf of the General Assembly (cf. Addendum A). Having done that I formulated questions that I thought would stimulate the interviewees to give detailed narrative accounts of their experiences in the unification process. The aim for these detailed narrative accounts of experiences is that it can give information about neglected but significant areas related to the process of unification in the UPCSA.  I reduced the questionnaire to only ONE main research question and FIVE sub-questions following from the main question as stated in chapter 1.

**Main research question:**

*What would the Worship Service Book look like in order to enhance unity in the UPCSA?*

**Sub questions:**

1. *Do physical structural differences of the Service Books of the former denominations still matter in the UPCSA or not?*
2. *Does the Service Book enhance unity?*
3. *How do ministers appropriate the existing worship Service Book with regard to its promotion of church unity?*
4. *What are the good qualities needed to enhance the Service Book to be a liturgical instrument acceptable to everyone to assist in the process of unification?*
5. *What can be done to improve the content of the Service Book to assist with the process of unification that can be celebrated in liturgy?*

The researcher then identified interviewees considering the views that have already been explained above regarding experience, participation and the understanding of the process. After the researcher explained the purpose of the study to those he had identified and also after he clarified and answered all the questions that were asked, letters of consent were sent to the interviewees. When they were signed the researcher collected them. The format of the letter of consent that was given and signed by all interviewees is also attached as Addendum B.

## 5.4.2  Structure of Interviews

All the interviews were structured and planned in a manner that the interviewees and the researcher had the required time in order to give the interview full attention. "Ensure that the interviewee has planned to put aside the required amount of time so that she or he is able to

give the interview undivided attention" (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter 2006: 298). The research ensured that there would be no interruptions and disturbances during the interview and the duration of the interview was thirty and not more than forty minutes.

### 5.4.3 Language used

Though all interviewees were well conversed in English, to some of them English was not their first language; some their first language was Zulu, one Greek, the other Afrikaans, one Pedi and only one was English speaking. Despite the fact that the interviews were conducted in English, from time to time in the process of the interview some of them would use their vernacular when trying to make an emphasis on a specific point.

As a researcher I had to be careful of not creating an opposition between the interviewees and myself by undermining those who used vernacular or disregard their input as inadequate (cf. Singh 2004: 98). This would create barriers that would hinder the whole process of getting information from the interviewees.

### 5.4.4 Social relations/discourse

The researcher employed this line of qualitative approach from an interpretive perspective in order to collect data from its context and this was done by being compassionate and engaging the interviewees in an open and empathic way (cf. Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter 2006: 287). Efforts were made by the research to minimise and avoid any kind of disturbance to the interviews.

**5.5  The narrative interpretive analysis of the interview generated data**

The amount of data generated in this process turned out to be an enormous assignment to design or develop a stratagem immediately. According to Wepener (2009: 32) the explicit questions we formulate together with the approach employed to gather information is 'the first step towards interpretation, because there are always certain conscious and/or unconscious assumptions present behind every choice.'

During the field work period the researcher attended four church services in line with the participatory observation approach to gather the information related to the liturgy in the UPCSA. Adding to this, semi-structured interviews were conducted as planned with the five identified ministers of the UPCSA.

At this point the basic principles of liturgy that if implemented can bring the UPCSA (i.e. all her congregations and members) to close conformity with each other in liturgical terms or in terms of worship will discussed. These principles are derived from the collected data. But before that a brief analysis of the Service Book is essential.

**5.6  Service Book**

The Service Book is the tool that is meant to be used as a guide by everybody in the worship service. In itself the Service Book is not going to take on a certain look in order to enhance unity. It's not that the Service Book is going to be designed to enhance unity except in the sense that the orders of service in it will be or are being designed for the whole church (denomination) and to the extent that the whole church (denomination) adopts and uses those services and replace other services with them.

Four of the interviewees put it very clear during the interviews that the present Service Book is used by very few ministers and congregations except only when they conduct Presbytery services like inductions and ordinations of ministers. Many of the congregations in the

UPCSA especially the black congregations and black ministers still use the old United Congregational Church in Southern Africa (UCCSA) worship book called *Inkonzo zamabandla ase-rabe*. Few white congregations and white ministers on the other hand still use the old English Service Book and a number of them use the present Service Book.

The challenge raised by one of the interviewees is that one section of the denomination (those who come from the former PCSA) can claim to have a Service Book. The other section (those coming from the RPCSA) can't claim to have a service book because they know very well that even previously, meaning before the union they never had their own service book. Instead they were using the old UCCSA worship book that the majority still uses presently.

Rev Masakhane affirms that "If you want the liturgy to enhance unity then it means liturgy, the Service Book should talk to the people" (second interview 21:12:2012). The challenge raised is that the current service book including the other two that are still being used does not talk to the context of the people liturgically. When it comes to the vernacular it is clear that this service book is a document that is not derived from the context and culture of the people it is supposed to serve. It is just a direct translation from the liturgy that was talking to a particular context then. One example mentioned here is the one used by ministers when they do committal in funeral services.

You find a black minister in the deep rural area of KwaNdabakazi in Butterworth standing on top of the grave talking about ashes to ashes. The question is where are these ashes he/she is talking about because in the context of these people they don't understand what the minister is talking about. Ministers say these words because the liturgy they use is the direct translation from the liturgy that talks to a particular context simply translated to the vernacular then it is accepted as the liturgy.

Another example cited is the service of the unveiling of the tombstone. The minister is asked by the family to come and unveil the tombstone of their loved one. The minister gets there, he/she does a prayer and asks the family to do the unveiling themselves yet he/she was asked to come and do this. Now the liturgy and the practice that ministers follow is foreign to the

context of the people they minister to. They do this because they have no clear liturgical guide for some of these services if they do they are irrelevant for some contexts they minister to. For the Service Book to enhance unity then it means the liturgy in it should talk to the people. For example even in prayers people need to relate and associate themselves to prayers that are made. For example if a minister translates a prayer about beautiful flowers that God has given the people. For the people at Macibe in Centani in the Eastern Cape if you talk about beautiful flowers you are not talking to them because in their context, their environment is not about flowers; it is about cattle, sheep and goats and with regard to plants it is grass, shrubs and a few trees. So liturgy should be talking to people. If God is great, he has protected and looked at their households, he has looked after their livestock. The liturgy should be talking to them then it addresses exactly what is in the context of the people.

Ministers are also clear in their minds that when they talk of unity they are not talking uniformity. Rev Masakhane said: "What I am saying is that when I look at the Service Book and when I look at the liturgy I am saying we should not strive for uniformity, we need to strive for unity" (second interview 21:12:2012). Rev Majobo on the other hand also maintains that; "When these two churches decided on union, they were not striving for uniformity but they were striving for unity which gives freedom to express themselves" (third interview 09: 05:  2013). Ministers agree that the UPCSA needs to take seriously that certain elements of liturgy need to be considered as important and are there in worship services.

For the Service Book to enhance unity in the UPCSA it should obviously have traditions from both sides. For example the English part of the UPCSA doesn't sing *Isidumiso (Te Deum Laudamus)*. This element of liturgy is practiced by the Black congregations especially those coming from the former RPCSA and at General Assembly level only. This observation was so glaring. The reason for this could be that these congregations that do not sing *Isidumiso* don't know it, and they don't learn it.

It would be advisable for the interest of unity in the UPCSA to translate *Isidumiso* in English and put it in the Service Book for everyone to learn, understand and know what it is but don't

lose singing it in an African language because that is part of the tradition. Rev Basil stated that: "I think there must be some Catholic and Apostolic elements contained in the Service Book and *Isidumiso* and Creeds would be some of those elements" (fourth interview 15:07:2014). This point leads to a fundamental opinion that the UPCSA as a denomination which consists of people who speak different languages should move very quickly to translate the Service Book as a whole into various vernaculars.

### 5.7  Vestments

The other interesting observation is the variety of dress that doesn't always make sense. Rev Basil suggests that "the other thing that the Service Book should have which would enhance unity is a section that talks about dress" (fourth interview 15:07:2014). A lot of young ministers in particular, either don't want the liturgical robes or they get very interesting robes. Accordingly some of the dresses ministers wear project them as actors and become a distraction thereof.

Whereas in the Reformed tradition the minister should deface him/herself. Rev Majobo mentioned that "So you cover yourself so that the congregation is not drawn to a person and the vestments we use are aids in our worship" (third interview 09: 05: 2013). The minister covers him/herself with specific vestments not any kind of vestments as some of the young ministers do, so that the congregation is not drawn to a minister. The congregation in worship must focus to that Supreme Being that they are worshipping. Above all God has established that his people should worship him and direct their worship to him and his glory. Nothing should dismiss and undermine this supreme objective of worship.  In the Reformed tradition therefore the focus in worship is absolutely upon God and his glory (Hastings 2014: 47).

So the UPCSA needs at some point to say these are the appropriate robes and these are the colours for each season which the minister could wear and also for funerals for example. This information can be included in the Service Book. Certainly the Service Book with this information will guide and unite the denomination.

### 5.8  The Elements of Liturgy

The researcher observed that some ministers and congregations of the UPCSA do not consider some of the elements of liturgy as important. Nyanda acknowledged that; "Ministers in our Church are casual when it comes to liturgy yet liturgy is central to the life of the Church" (first interview 14: 12: 2012). In order for the members of the UPCSA to know that in public worship there are basic liturgical elements that are common in liturgy, ministers themselves need to be serious about liturgy. It doesn't matter whether they are in Willowvale in the Eastern Cape or Stellenbosch in the Western Cape; whether in Msinga in KwaZulu Natal or Seshego in Limpopo, what is important is that the elements of liturgy are there in public worship. Rev Bennet alluded to this when he said "If every minister of the UPCSA can understand and observe the basic principles of liturgy our church can experience a greater sense of mutual union" (fifth interview 16:07:2014).

People should not be confused when they get to a worship service in the UPCSA. They should have no doubt that they are in the Presbyterian Church or the minister in charge of the service is a Presbyterian and even be puzzled whether the service has started or not. They should not have these questions yet they are Presbyterians. Basic elements of liturgy that they know as Presbyterians should guide them whether they worship in Diepkloof or in Midrand. In other words although the researcher argues in favour of inculturation, this must be done within the confines of the known UPCSA *ardinarium* (order of worship).

Most Ministers and congregations do not see whole worship structured as a dialogue between God and his people yet there is a basic form of the Reformed liturgy which is categorised as follows:

    a) God's Call: God call His people to meet in worship.
    b) Approach: This is the peoples' approach to God.
    c) The Word: God speak to His people.
    d) Response: The people's response to the Word that is preached.
    e) Communion: It should always be visible that this is the Church of Word and

Sacraments.

This then leads us to the fundamental elements of liturgy that are regarded as less important by some of the ministers and congregations of the UPCSA. Calvin was certain that the essence of our worship of God and work for him should be grounded on the Word of God (Piper & Mathis 2010: 32). "According to Calvin only what was commanded by God through the Scriptures should be an element of worship" (cf. Piper & Mathis 2010: 48).

### 5.8.1 Call to Worship

The worship service starts with God's call. First ministers and congregations need to understand that the call to worship should be in the words of scripture. Second it should be a call. In other words call to worship is God calling the congregation or church to meet for worship. So therefore it should be a call to worship like it is expressed at the end of the book of Psalms. It must be a text that calls people to worship and not just the reading of any text.

The call to worship should start with a call. Some ministers would even introduce the text and say this is found in the book of so and so. That is a poor understanding of liturgy. The call to worship is God's call and that is the first thing that has to happen, God speaks.

### 5.8.2 Approach

### 5.8.2.1 Praise God

The call to worship is followed by a hymn of praise, prayers of praise and adoration, and then we confess our sins because as we praise him in his Holiness we realise our ungodliness. This is our approach. When you approach a senior person you have got to have good decorum.

### 5.8.2.2 Confession of sins and the Assurance of Grace

This is an important point for Calvin that the confession of sins should be followed by the assurance of Grace to those who truly repent and believe. Most ministers and congregations of the UPCSA leave out the assurance of grace and that's a weakening of the reformed principle. People need to be assured of the forgiveness of their sins. That must be treated as a very important part of the service. Some ministers even lift their hands when they declare the assurance of grace to add emphasis to it.

### 5.8.2.3  Prayer for illumination / Epiclesis

This element of liturgy is regarded by most ministers and congregations of the UPCSA as less important as a result most ministers don't do this prayer. Some ministers often make the prayer for illumination just before the sermon after the reading of the Scriptures. It is a reformed principle that when Scripture is read we need the Holy Spirit for the Word of God to speak through Scripture. So the prayer for illumination should come before Scripture readings not after.

### 5.8.2.4  God speaks (The Word)

Prayers of illuminations are then followed by the reading of the Scriptures and the preaching of the Word. This represents God coming to us. Calvin believed that the Word of God through the reading and preaching of the Word was sufficient as an authority for the Church – *Sola Scriptura* (cf. Piper and Mathis 2010: 36).

It would be useful and encouraging to mention that in all the services attended by the researcher there was a sermon. This is encouraging because it is an indication that in all congregations and by all ministers of the UPCSA the Word is preached.

### 5.8.2.5 Response

The Word is followed by the response. People respond to the Word with the creed, intercessory prayer, offerings and even notices form part of the peoples' response to the Word.

### 5.8.2.6 Offerings

Another liturgical flaw performed by some congregations and ministers of the UPCSA is that they simply stick the offerings somewhere because they want to get it over with it. They don't consider the fact that offerings should be understood as a response, a symbol of responding to the Word, what we heard and what people are to the Word of God that is preached.

### 5.8.2.7 Notices

This element of liturgy is also not placed at its relevant position in the liturgy by some congregations and ministers. A number of them announce notices at the beginning of the service. The impact of this is to say the service is about the people. It is always a fundamental temptation in worship to put God on the periphery and people at the centre.

Piper recalls Godfrey's lamentation that "The worship of the Church has become a feel-good experience, rather than a meeting with the holy God of the universe. Exciting music has become the new Sacrament mediating the presence of God and his grace. Sermons have become pop psychology, moralistic exercises in self-help" (2010: 37).

It is always a mistake to make God for our good instead of understanding that worship is the glorification of God. It is not fundamentally about us but it is about God.

Notices therefore can be announced after the Lord's Prayer which must also be placed at an appropriate position in the liturgy. Because notices are very often about things we need to pray for, it is appropriate for the prayers of intersection and petition to follow immediately after the notices.

## 5.9   The Lord's Prayer and its Positioning in a service

There are congregations in the UPCSA which do not have the Lord's Prayer on Sunday. That is poor liturgy, poor understanding of liturgy because the Lord's Prayer needs to be said or sung at every service. In fact the Lord's Prayer is meant to be said every day and certainly in the history of liturgy it is part of the Sunday service.

Some ministers and congregations in the UPCSA do not understand that the Lord's Prayer is the climax of all prayers and has been understood as such in the history of the church. It should therefore come in its proper place after the great prayer of thanksgiving which is the climatic prayer in the service when there is communion.

It was with shock and surprise to observe one UPCSA minister who visited another UPCSA congregation as an interim-moderator conducting the Sunday service. He got to the pulpit, he prayed and immediately after that he announced that the congregation should sing the Lord's Prayer. I noticed that I was not the only one puzzled but some members of the congregation were also confused.

The order of service should be structured the same whether there is communion or not. The only difference would be that there will be no communion. The Lord's Prayer should come at the end of the prayer of thanksgiving towards the end of the service.

### 5.10  Sacraments

There is a congregation which because baptised children are now allowed to take communion, a wrong Reformed practise is practised in this congregation. In order to make it convenient for them to take communion before they go to Sunday school, the minister gives them communion before the sermon. This is because of a basic ignorance about the liturgical principle that Augustine and Calvin emphasised.

The fundamental principle that Augustine and Calvin wrote about with regard to sermons and communion is that the reading of Scripture and the preaching of the Word must precede the communion because the preaching of the Word is what gives meaning to the Sacraments.
Yes we do say supremacy of the Word. There are Sacraments within the Word. In the catechism of the UPCSA there is a question which says; "Do the Sacraments and the Scriptures say anything different"? (Catechism 2004: 11). The answer is no, because the Sacrament speaks to the senses. They speak to the eyes, smelling and taste. Whereas the Word speaks to our hearing but the sacraments speak to the rest of our senses which means it completes our being in totality.

Calvin did not want any communion service without the Word because the Word must precede and informs the sacraments. These are the kind of things that the UPCSA needs to be careful that they don't have disunity in and they understand the principles that are involved.
Now when the sacrament is observed without the Word which informs the congregation about its meaning of the gospel, the sacrament turns to be either dismissed as a mere empty sign or else understood in a magical way.

### 5.11  Consecration of the element

There are other ministers who often forget about the consecration of the elements. This is basic disrespect being shown to the sacrament. The sacraments are based on the four actions of Jesus; he took, he gave thanks, he broke and he shared or distributed. These four actions

are basic and must be put forward in that order. If somebody leaves out taking for instance that is not showing respect for the sacraments. Again if somebody starts back to front, he or she starts with the prayer of thanksgiving first then breaks the bread that is not respecting the sacraments. That is just nothing else but chaos.

**In summary**

- God calls
- The congregation approaches in praise and confession
- God speaks through the scripture and sermon
- The congregation responds with confession of faith and offerings
- God shares the communion
- And finally the congregation prays in response to that; for the people, congregation, church and world
- Last God sends the congregation out to the world with his blessing.

### 5.12 Basic Principles of Liturgy.

It came out very clear in all the interviews that it is not going to be easy to bring people to one point in the sense that when the former two churches united they were not striving for uniformity. They were striving for unity which gives freedom to express themselves. These two Churches united "in the belief that it is God's will for them: that this union of Churches holding the Christian Faith and practicing the Presbyterian Order in Southern Africa will be a strengthening of their witness to the Word of God and also a material contribution to the cause of wider Church union in Africa and in the world" (PCSA decision of the General Assembly 1998).

It has been emphasised by the interviewees that the understanding of unity in this instance doesn't necessarily mean that everybody must use exactly the same order for every service.

What it means is that ministers and congregations should understand and all observe the basic principles of liturgy or worship and implement them in their churches.

The only things that they agreed that they would strive for are the basics that are there in the reformed tradition. If this is done definitely it will bring about a greater feeling of common unity.

In principle what is needed is to understand the basic liturgical principles that are discovered in the study of history of liturgy and that the modern Liturgical Movement has revived. The Liturgical Movement has tried and for many churches it has not just tried but succeeded in arousing them from being in rut of their particular and peculiar traditions to understand what important principles apply in liturgy.

### 5.13 Church Associations

The issue of unity in the UPCSA is not only about enhancing the Service Book. Yes it is appreciated the fact that the Service Book is an important tool in the denomination to guide liturgically but there are all sorts of other things that need to be addressed for the unity of the UPCSA to work.

Negatively the other thing that affects unity of the UPCSA that they are wrestling with at the moment is associations. Their associations if not called to order are really not going to enable the denomination to be a properly united church.

The associations in the UPCSA are powerful to the extent that they think they are the church. There should be mechanism that must be employed to make associations and individuals in the church to refrain from undermining the unity of the UPCSA.

## 5.14 Basis of Union

Basis of Union of the UPCSA is the underpinning document that was agreed by both General Assemblies of the former denominations prior to the union. It is the basis of this document that both denominations were prompted to agree to the union. The two black ministers out of the three interviewed stressed that the Basis of Union is the foundation of the UPCSA and without it there is no UPCSA. One argued that the Basis of union should be the prefix of the Manual of Faith and Order and for the unity of the UPCSA it be treated with veneration by all members of the denomination.

Precisely because of the challenges the UPCSA is facing regarding conflict in the associations which threatens the unity of the denomination, 2014 General Assembly resolved as follows:

> "…that for the sake of the unity of the UPCSA we should not compromise the Basis of the Union at any cost. Going back to adjust the Basis of the Union to the interest of the different groups can be dangerous to the life of the Church and can create larger conflicts in the Church.
>
> …instructs the Clerk of Assembly to make the Basis of the Union documents available to Presbyteries and congregations (as an appendix to the Manual of Faith and Order).
>
> The Assembly strongly calls all members of the UPCSA, its Associations, ministers and elders to uphold the Basis of the Union as their mutual covenant with one another before God and God's people, to respect and maintain it without prejudice towards any people, and to adjust any other documents in the Church (UPCSA) to its principles.
>
> The Assembly acknowledges that the two Groups will continue to work together for a period of three years.
>
> The Assembly establishes a Working Group with the following terms of reference:
>
> I. To organize meeting points for (representatives of) the two groups of the Associations to interact in all possible ways, to help build their relationship towards unity. Such coming together should be at least every six months, or more often as deemed necessary.
>
> II. To look at the role and function of the Church Associations and formulate this into a common Constitution using the existing constitutions, without being restricted to them, addressing the issue of uniforms, and other such details pertaining to Associations.

III.     To facilitate the interaction of the Associations at Presbytery and congregational levels;

IV.     The Working Group is to report every year during this time period to the General Assembly or Executive Commission on the progress being made, and

V.     In the third year to conduct a final comprehensive review and report to the 2018 General Assembly.

The Assembly agrees that the Working Group consist of the Rev. Prof. J. Pillay and Rev. Rod Botsis as co-conveners, the Moderator, General Secretary, Convener of the Associations Committee and 8 further members; the names of which must be provided by each of the Associations by 30th July 2014" (2014 UPCSA General Assembly resolution).

This resolution of Assembly seems to have revived some hope in the minds of many in the denomination. A number of people are watching this process with keen interest and also praying that it should produce fruitful results in resolving conflict within the associations.

The few who feel that with this resolution the Assembly is reinventing the wheel should take in consideration the fact that this resolution doesn't question the existence and legitimacy of the Basis of Union. All that this resolution says is that members of the UPCSA must always remember what binds them and not forget that founding rule. They must preserve it "as their mutual covenant with one another before God and God's people, to respect and maintain it without prejudice towards any people, and to adjust any other documents in the Church (UPCSA) to its principles" (2014 UPCSA General Assembly resolution).

### 5.15 Conclusion

The main objective of this chapter is to put forward themes that are identified from the narratives of the interviewees and arising from the participatory observation. The researcher also presents an interpretive analysis, the results and the findings of the study. The purpose is to identify important themes that are habitual and relevant to the study.

The threat to the UPCSA is the UPCSA itself. It is failing itself by not using the powerful existing structure it has *viz.* Presbyteries and Sessions in trying to create greater unity in the

denomination. It is also weakening its union by being unable to develop its leaders especially the clergy with regard to the basic liturgical principles and Vestments.

It is encouraging though to see that despite the lack of understanding of the basic liturgical principles, the bewildering variety of liturgical robes wore by the clergy in the UPCSA and the conflict within the associations, there is still a keen interest to work together to address these challenges. Most of the people are ready to welcome any strategy which can assist in enhancing unity in the denomination. This analysis therefore leads us to the conclusion of this study which will be explored in the following chapter.

# CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

The study set out to investigate the role of liturgy in the process of unification and has identified the quality and usage of liturgy in worship in the Uniting Presbyterian Church in South Africa (UPCSA). In the process the motives and purpose for unity, the type and the degree of the required corrective measures and the role of the General Assembly, Presbyteries and Sessions and the effect of intercession have been identified.

The study has also enquired whether the influence of church associations in transforming liturgy in the UPCSA has been eroded. The general hypothetical literature on this subject and specifically in the context of the reformed tradition and in the UPCSA in particular is inclusive on a number of sub questions emanated from the main research question. The study sought to answer one main research question:

*What would the Worship Service Book look like in order to enhance unity in the UPCSA?*

The overall method incorporated both an anthropological and theological approach in order to establish the rituals of the UPCSA was undertaken using Post's methodology of 'interference and intuition' as a primary approach (Post 2001: 61-62) as mentioned in the second chapter. This was employed with regard to thick descriptions of liturgies based on participatory observation in the qualitative chapters in combination with all the other chapters (Wepener 2001: 7-8).

The main empirical findings are detailed and summarised in the respective empirical chapter: Empirical findings on the role of liturgy in the process of unification.

In chapter one the researcher drew the historical background of the UPCSA in relation to the union and developed for the purpose a working hypothesis for this research,

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namely that the transformation of liturgical practises in the UPCSA can enhance the quality of the ongoing process of unification.

In chapter two the researcher has developed a methodological and theoretical framework that demonstrates the comprehensive approach used to gather information and how the information was approached in order to get the findings.

In chapter three the researcher has looked at the role of liturgy in the UPCSA with greater emphasis on the Presbyterian theology of unity referring to the early fathers of the Reformation.

In chapter four the potential of the transformative power of liturgy in the process of unification is explored.

In chapter five the empirical findings on the role of liturgy in enhancing unity are presented. Research results are discussed and analysed with respect to the hypotheses.
In the light of the findings of this study it was vividly uncovered that liturgy plays a very central role in the process of unifying the Church. It became clear that what (Wepener 2005: 109-127) said cannot be disputed that "Liturgy has a formative power in the life of congregations and individuals (ethics, identity etc.). Almost all interviewees agree that liturgy can play a vital role in uniting the UPCSA provided it is relevant to the contexts and cultures of the people and the denomination itself, and owned by everybody in the denomination.

It has been made clear in the research that with a common liturgy that honours and glorifies God by celebrating union in the unity of the Trinity, the transformative power of that liturgy can transform the things that hinder unity from conforming to the likeness of Christ, the Head of the Church.

The historical research investigation in this study reveals that one of the distinguishing characteristics of Reformed worship is that it is classified by order and dignity and the

central distinctive of the Reformed or Presbyterian worship is that Worship is first and foremost for God not for our own benefit. We do not participate in worship to enjoy ourselves or grandiose ourselves.

The following theme elements were identified by all interviewees as very critical in contributing to enhancing unity in the UPCSA:

- **Service Book**

All the interviewees are of one accord that the Service Book is a tool that should be used as a guide by everybody in the worship service. The three black ministers interviewed highlighted the fact that the Service Book has a glaring shortcoming in that it is not derived from the contexts and cultures of all the people it is supposed to serve. There is thus consensus that there is a huge lack of liturgical inculturation when it comes to the Service Book. All of the interviewees also emphasised the need for the translation of the Service Book into the vernacular languages which form the UPCSA and encourage ministers and congregations to use them.

- **The elements of liturgy**

It has been observed by the researcher that most ministers and congregations do not see the whole of worship structured as a dialogue between God and his people. It has been observed that some ministers and congregations of the UPCSA do not follow the basic form of the reformed liturgy as presented in the Service Book because there is no such thing as one form of Reformed Liturgy as a result they don't consider some of the elements of liturgy to be important.

- **Basic Principles of Liturgy**

All the interviewees raised the fact that by unity they do not mean uniformity. They don't mean that everybody must use the same order for every service. They all stressed that what they mean is that ministers and congregations of the UPCSA must understand and observe the basic liturgical principles of the reformed tradition and implement them in their congregations.

- **Church Associations**

Apart from the shortcomings of the Service Book and all the other concerns raised, the majority of the interviewees alluded to the fact that Church Associations if not called to order are a threat to the unity of the UPCSA.

- **Basis of Union**

Two of the Black ministers interviewed emphasised that without the Basis of Union there is no UPCSA. For the unity to be enhanced they mentioned a need for the Basis of Union to be treated with reverence in the UPCSA.

In the light of these empirical findings the sustainable framework suggests the achievement of an anthology of appropriate resources for liturgy in the process of union in the UPCSA.

Through this research the researcher humbly concludes that the role of liturgy in the process of union is essential. As Tillo in Post (2001: 125) puts it "An important reason is that liturgy in all its different aspects is a symbolic presentation of a hidden reality". The researcher also concludes that with the understanding of the same basic principles and taking them seriously there will be a greater unity in the UPCSA liturgically or as far as worship is concerned and therefore in so far as worship contributes to their identity, a greater unity of their identity between them. According to Barnard and

Wepener (2012: 3) "…liturgical rituals is no function of whatever goal, but nevertheless serves certain aims".

In order to bring the UPCSA into closer conformity with itself in liturgical terms or in terms of worship, in view of the above conclusions the researcher therefore humbly submits the following recommendations, that the UPCSA through its structures of governance:

- Should acquaint itself with this research work and develop an alternative plan of action.

- Should develop the current Service Book by designing orders of service that are liturgically sound and relevant to the contexts and cultures of the people for the whole denomination to the extent that the whole denomination adopts and uses those services.

- Should get basic reformed liturgical principles communicated to the ministers and congregations and give examples of how these basic liturgical principles are implemented in services and start applying these principles and using these services.

- In their dispute regarding the discrepancies of their union as far as associations are concerned they have to depend upon the forthrightness of the General Assembly. That it should be frank and honest because if not they are going to continue with that struggle there may come a point where there could be divisions not necessarily of the associations but even within the Church itself.

- Together with inserting the Basis of Union as a prefix of the Manual of Faith and order the Church should consider a process of developing a theology of the Basis of Union and teach its members especially leaders to embrace the theological meaning of the Basis of Union.

With these points in mind I end this thesis with the following themes that are in need of further research as it emerged in the course of this research:

- Liturgical language and inclusivity in worship

- Liturgy and hospitality

- Liturgy and the culture of consumerism and globalisation.

In conclusion there can be a better feeling of being together in the UPCSA if there was a greater similarity between the services that the ministers and congregation use and the ownership of the union by everyone. Many years ago there was an American TV program about a man whose wife died and he had children. He married a woman whose husband had died and she also had children. Then they had children of their own. The program was called "Yours, Mine and Ours". This research has spelt out that this is exactly what the UPCSA needs. They need to take, they need to recognise what was good in both (former denominations), and has been used in both and keep them and probably together with new additions. "Yours, Mine and Ours."

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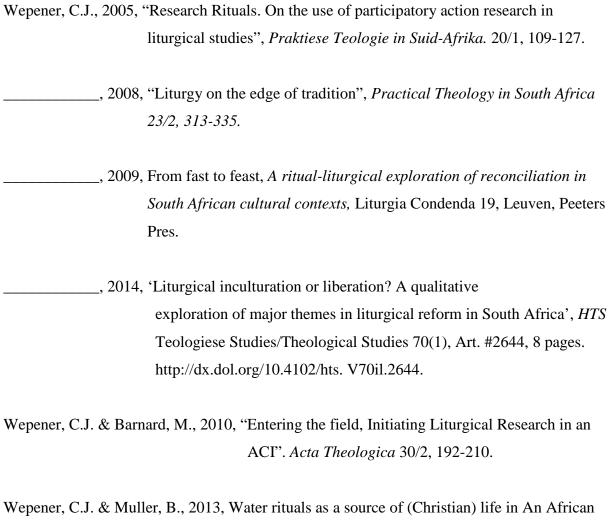RPCSA 1995 Ecumenical Relations Committee Report to General Assembly 1995.

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THE UNITING
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IN SOUTHERN
AFRICA

NEC TAMEN CONSUMEBATUR

15<sup>th</sup> May 2012

**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

This letter serves to confirm that the Rev McEven Lulama Mshumpela is an ordained minister of the Uniting Presbyterian Church in Southern Africa. He has permission to carry out research in connection with his studies at the University of Pretoria.

Yours sincerely,

T.W. COULTER
**CLERK OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**ADDENDUM  B**

**Dear Reverend …………**

**Re: Informed Consent**

I am a post graduate student at University of Pretoria, Department of Theology. As part of my coursework, I am conducting interviews, the purpose of which is to gather information as to how liturgy can enhance unity in the process of unification in the UPCSA. The time required for an interview is not longer than an hour.

The interview will be conducted only after I have received a signed copy of this consent from you at the place of your own choice. With your permission I request to audiotape this interview. I am the only one who will have access to the tape which I will personally transcribe and all identifiers will be removed. Your identity will not be revealed in the final dissertation, it will be kept confidential, and all information will be treated likewise. Your participation in this research is voluntary, should you wish to withdraw from the study you are free at any time without consequences, data collected will be destroyed and all those who have access to that data will be identified. There are no risks or direct benefits to you by participating in this interview.

For any further questions about this research please contact me at 083 493 6731 or email: mshumpela.africafirst@gmail.com or my Supervisor Prof. C.S. Wepener: Cas.Wepener@up.ac.za

Please sign and I will call to check when should I come to collect a copy of this consent and a second copy is for your records. By signing this letter, you give me permission to report your responses anonymously in the final manuscript to be submitted to my supervisor as part of my course work.

McEven Lulama Mshumpela

----------------------------------------

I have read the procedures described above for this research interview. I voluntarily agree to participate in this interview and I have received a copy of this description.

**Name of the interviewee:** _____

_____

**Signature of the Interviewee**          **Place:** _____          **Date:** _____

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