Hybrid identity:
A missional approach to inclusivity

by

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for the requirements of a

Magister Artium

in

Theology

under the supervision of

Prof. Nelus Niemandt.
Declaration

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Abstract
This research deals with the journey towards racial diversity in homogenous white Afrikaans faith communities such as the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). This study is an account of the researcher’s own discontent with being a minister in an racially homogenous faith community against the backdrop of his own journey of finding an integrated identity in a post-apartheid South Africa. It deals with the question of how a church like the DRC can play an intentional role in the formation of racially inclusive communities. The study brings together shifts in missional theology, personal reflections from DRC ministers and contemporary studies on whiteness. Can a homogenous white church become a place that cultivates racial diversity? How can missional theology be a guide on this journey? Are there other voices that echo the feeling of the researcher? The study looks towards a missional imaginary centered around the Trinity and the Incarnation as a field map for racial diversity in the church. This is mirrored against contemporary studies on white identity in a post-apartheid South Africa. Out of this conversation the researcher argues for a creative discovery of hybrid identities within white faith communities. Missional exercises such as listening to the stories of strangers, cross cultural pilgrimages and eating together in strange places can assist communities on this journey.

Opsomming
Hierdie verhandeling ondersoek die vraag of kerke soos die Nederduitse Gereformeerde Kerk in Suid Afrika (NGK) ‘n kreatiewe rol kan speel in die skep van veelrassige inklusiewe gemeenskappe. Die studie bring byeen die vars skuiwe in missionale teologie van van die laaste 60 jaar, stories van NGK predikante en hedendaagse studies oor wit identiteit in ‘n post-apartheid Suid Afrika. Die studie kyk veral na die Drie-Eenheid en Inkarnasie van Christus as taalhuise vir die vorming van ‘n diverse verbeelding. Wit identiteit in Suid Afrika kom veral onder die soeklig. Die navorser pleit vir ‘n beweging na gemengde identiteite, eerder as rigiede en begrensde
identiteite. Missionele oefeninge soos om na vreemdelinge se stories te luister, kruiskulturele pelgrimstogte en saam-eet rituele kan gemeentes op hierdie weg begelei.
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Chapter 1
Introduction, research and methodology

Research Title:

*Hybrid identity: A missional approach to inclusivity*

Chapter outline

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1.1 Introduction
I am a white Afrikaans man, but I am more (and less) than this description.

I am a Christian. I am a minister in the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). I am Afrikaans. I am a man. I live in the north western suburbs of Johannesburg. I grew up in the eighties and nineties in a rural town in the Western Cape. I am a homeowner. I am a dog lover. I am divorced. I am rich. I have a degree. I own a car. I have a good debt record. I bake sourdough bread using classic French baking techniques. I am a 12th generation South African. I am of European descent, a bit of French Huguenot and a bit of Dutch. I am an Afrikaner. I am part of the Fourie, the Rossouw and the Geldenhuis family trees. I have a Broederbond family history. I love sport, except soccer. I cannot speak any other African language except Afrikaans. I am also mixed race, like most Afrikaner families in South Africa. Ironically I am also non-European.

Elsewhere in the world I am an African, except in Africa. Here I am an umlungu and a tourist. I have been a victim of violent crime. I am privileged by an unjust past. I am a recovering racist. I have friends from different races and cultures, none of them belonging to my DRC faith community. I believe in one holy catholic expression of church as confessed by the early Christians. I am a missional theologian. I believe the missio Dei is embodied when people grow slowly, like the roots of an old tree, through the concrete barriers of culture, race, class, sex and religion, moving from enemies to friends. I deeply believe that when we live our lives crossing these boundaries and growing closer to our perceived enemies, we embody the way of Jesus as told by the New Testament writers and we join in the missional movement of the triune God.

1.2 Problem statement
Since the early nineties, Afrikaners have been experiencing a massive identity shift. Neville Alexander (2011:41) reflects on the power of institutions, such as the state,
construct and reconstruct social identities. He then refers to the “unravelling of the supposedly immutable (‘granite’) Afrikaner identity that is taking place before our eyes.” Melissa Steyn (2001:155) identifies a sense of loss or displacement among white South Africans, which includes the Afrikaner community.

As a missional theologian and a minister of the DRC, I cannot help but reflect on these trends in relation to my own religious context. In Chapter 4 I explore how white South Africans experience a sense of loss after 1994. I am interested how churches such as the DRC have become a place where whites can still feel “at home”. In informal conversations, my colleagues and I have described our experiences of the white Afrikaans Christian community’s attitudes towards cultural diversity as follows: “the DRC and other similar faith communities are the last stronghold - die laaste bastion - of Afrikanerdom; one of the few places of “safety” where the Afrikaner still feels in control and powerful.”

At the church where I serve as pastor, we were considering speakers for a workshop on the national elections of 2014. I proposed Adriaan Basson, the editor of Beeld newspaper. The response from the team was a definite “no”, due to the fact, and I quote: “hy het onlangs die Afrikaners baie kwaad gemaak” (he recently angered the Afrikaners). They were referring to his newspaper reporting on an incident at Potchefstroom University, where students from a certain residence were using the Nazi salute in public gatherings. What stood out in the meeting was my colleagues’ immediate awareness of the people we journey with and their critical sentiment towards fellow Afrikaans South Africans who are stirring the cultural pot.

This reaction from my colleagues is understandable in the light of possible conflict and tensions. However, from a missional perspective, Afrikaans churches run the risk of becoming places of familiarity and safety into which its members retreat, avoiding the important but complex narratives of post-apartheid South Africa. If these communities
do not engage intentionally with others in the hope to learn diverse ways of being, the homogeneous white communities will become irrelevant to broader South African society.

I also have the privilege to work in the inner city among urban black youth as part of a development programme. Our team in the inner city is culturally diverse. The challenges relating to cross-cultural dynamics have been a rewarding learning journey. These newly formed relationships have shaped me in terms of how I see my own story being played out in the broader South African narrative. The journey with friends from other cultures has helped me to embrace my own heritage in a new and meaningful way. However, I find it difficult to translate these experiences back into my Afrikaans and white faith community.

Like my colleagues, I too sense a tension. It is a product of the missional language that our community has adopted in the last seven years and our members’ cultural expectations regarding our faith community’s role in their search to find a home in post-apartheid South Africa. Important missional developments within the DRC are countering the Afrikaner’s tendency to *trek laer*, resulting in a hopeful thread of change and renewal.

Nelus Niemandt (2007) writes in *Nuwe Drome vir Nuwe Werklikhede* that churches tend to have two reactions to a changing society. One reaction is to close up, like a tortoise pulling its head into its shell when danger is near. The missional reaction is the antithesis of this approach. Missional churches move with the change. “Journey onwards” writes Niemandt (2007:37).

Those who remember the DRC of the pre-1994 era will testify that the DRC has come a long way since 1994. It has grown from a church that supported apartheid and was banished to the deserts by the other members of the WCC, to an ecumenical
denomination that has been welcomed back into the fold of the WCC and has been actively engaging its members over the last 20 years to unite with URC and URCSA. On this path, the missional language of the missio Dei has helped the DRC to adopt an awareness regarding the importance of racial diversity in a post-apartheid South Africa. This is evident at local and national levels of the church.

One example is the recent Highveld Synod (2014) that embraced diversity as key outcome for missional churches. Liani Jansen van Rensburg reported on this in the Afrikaans newspaper Beeld. The article was titled “NGK gryp diversiteit aan” (the DRC has grabbed a hold on diversity). According to Van Rensburg (2014), this DRC synod had decided to focus on a “missional calling”.

The theme of the synod was “Veelkleurige gemeentes na ‘n veelkleurige gemeenskap”. This metaphor is loaded with all the elements of diversity that I aim to address in this research. In a statement, the newly elected moderator, Hugo van der Linde, told Van Rensburg (2014) that “we chose this theme, because we want to embrace diversity… We want to talk less and do more. We want to do more to cross boundaries and reach people that we would not have reached” (Van Rensburg, 2014).

It was also reported that the synod experimented with a missional exercise similar to what I will introduce in Chapter 2 and elaborate on in Chapter 5. The synod invited people from different backgrounds unfamiliar to the average DRC member attending the synod. “A conversation exercise was organised that included people from outside the synod” (Van Rensburg, 2014). People living on the street, people from Zimbabwe, and “even atheists” were included in this exercise. There was at least one guest at every table. The article also reports Van der Linde saying that this listening exercise helped the ministers to remove their “eyepatches”, hinting that it helped to break down stereotypes and prejudices (Van Rensburg, 2014).
This missional focus during the synod meeting paved the way for attendees to embrace diversity as an important outcome for the future growth of the Highveld Synod. The listening exercise is an important component of this journey. It highlights the need for creative practices and sustained habits (missional liturgies) within faith communities. The goal is to cultivate communities that are able to celebrate diversity and build unified relationships across various denominational and cultural boundaries, within the multi-layered South African context. This will not only result in a united Reformed Church for South Africa, but in a more reconciled and balanced society at large.

These experiments towards unity will become more crucial in the bigger scheme of things, because 20 years into the new democratic South Africa, the country remains a divided society. Instead of being narrowed, the divisions of the past still remain wide and have the potential to grow even wider over time. This is evident in one of the challenges that the country faces, as identified by the National Planning Commission in the National Development Plan: “Despite progress since 1994, South African society remains divided” (National Planning Commission, 2009).

Other voices echo the NPC. Verwey (2011:120) states that “the highly unequal nature of South African society” has become an “acute dimension”. It is common cause that the apartheid legacy is central to understanding the country’s divided nature. Neville Alexander writes about “The South African Nation” (Alexander, 2011:27-43). He explains that “one of the major challenges facing the post-apartheid dispensation is the creative resolution” of the divide-and-rule legacy of apartheid (Alexander, 2011:35). The notion of the “rainbow nation” is fading into an expression about the end of the post-1994 euphoria (Alexander, 2011:27).

As the Afrikaner community grapples with a loss of self, broader South African society is growing towards renewed tensions between different subcultures. Although the
country’s national identity aspires towards a nonracial, nonsexist society, the journey of becoming needs to deal with polarities that are screaming for attention.

The Afrikaner community can be likened to a teenager trying to find herself again after her world has been turned upside down by moving to another town or school away from all her friends. For many Afrikaners the DRC becomes a dark room in which the teenager wants to hide. But, because the DRC has embraced the challenging, yet colourful imagination of the *missio Dei* in a profound way through the grace of God and the guidance of strong leadership, the church cannot be that dark room. The church should rather be the caring and understanding parent who enters the room, opens the curtains and encourages the teenager not to be scared of the strange new neighbourhood, but rather to go out and have fun while making new friends.

While South Africans struggle, creatively and painfully, to bridge the gaps between a society divided by an unjust past and an increasingly complex present-day reality, missional theology that centres around the *missio Dei* can and will become an important voice guiding the church to intentionally join God’s reconciling work in a divided world.

### 1.3 Research question

Can my faith journey within a homogeneous white DRC faith community help me cultivate an inclusive, hospitable way of life in a multi-cultural context, or has my church experience become something that I retreat into, away from the complexities of a multi-racial, post-apartheid South Africa?

### 1.4 Aim of the study

With this research I hope to shed light on how developments in missional theology lead to ecclesiological practices and experiments in the DRC that challenge old paradigms of whiteness and rigid boundaries regarding identity. By echoing the concerns of the
National Planning Commission regarding the dividedness of South African society, I will show that DRC communities who have embraced a missional hermeneutic of diversity will have an important reconciling and unifying role to play in the broader South African context. I will do this as follows:

- exploring the language of a trinitarian theology within missiology as a guide for multi-cultural ministry;
- engaging urban DRC ministers’ racial awareness and cultural stereotypes; and
- searching for hopeful stories of where DRC communities are experimenting with crossing racial and cultural boundaries.

1.5 Guiding questions
1. How is the theology of the trinity inviting the white Afrikaans church towards a new expression of church in post-apartheid South Africa?
2. Is there a place for a homogeneous white Afrikaans expression of faith within a culturally diverse society?
3. How can churches move from a place of affirming mono-cultural beliefs and traditions to a community that cultivates new “imaginations of being” in the context of a diverse society?
4. How can the recent developments from studies regarding whiteness be helpful to the white Afrikaans church’s journey towards being an inclusive, integrated community?
5. What communal experiments, practices and habits can be developed to aid congregations on this journey?

1.6 Research outline
The research process consists of four main components that fit together like the pieces of a puzzle:
1. a literary study of a missional hermeneutic framework as backdrop for the narratives identified through the qualitative research. The literary study builds on the link between the theology of the trinity and missiology as God’s movement in this world. The church is commissioned by a “boundary-crossing God” to become reconciling communities.

2. qualitative research method using in-depth interviews with DRC ministers in suburban contexts similar to my own.

3. a comparison of the missional theory and narratives to studies on whiteness in a post-apartheid SA society, and drawing from recent academic developments pertaining to the Afrikaner community.

4. Three missional practices for DRC communities.

1.7 Missional hermeneutics
The research question and interviews are framed against the backdrop of theoretical developments in missional theology. Fresh imaginations in missional theology have been cultivating a vibrant missional hermeneutic in DRC communities. Brian D. Russell (2010) defines this framework as an “interpretive approach that privileges mission as the key to reading the Scriptures... A missional hermeneutic seeks to hear the Scriptures as an authoritative guide to God’s mission in the world so that communities of faith can participate fully in God’s mission” (Russell, 2010).

This “interpretation lens” has shaped ministers and communities to interpret scripture (and context) creatively by asking, for instance, “What is God up to?”. Discernment practices such as “Wandel in die Woord en Wêreld” (walk in scripture and the world) have helped to cultivate this awareness that God is doing great things and that He invites the church to participate in his work.
Van Wyngaard (2014) identifies in this missional imagination a dominant theme for crossing cultural, social, gender, age and racial boundaries. The theme of crossing boundaries has the potential to cultivate an ecclesiology/ethos of diversity, which in turn can be in conflict with fixed homogeneous identities. This research question is developed out of the tension between this missional hermeneutic and a cultural preference for homogeneity.

1.8 Research methodology

1.8.1 Qualitative research methodology

By using a qualitative research approach within a missional hermeneutic framework, I was able to identify recurring narratives or themes relating to cross-cultural diversity. Conclusions are based on my observations and interpretations of these narratives. “Qualitative research is designed to reveal a target audience’s range perceptions with reference to specific topics or issues” (What is Qualitative, n.d.).

By using in-depth interviews with small groups of people, the results of qualitative research are descriptive rather than predictive. Through studying a specific context using qualitative research methods such as interviews and focus group discussions, I was able to identify integrated theological themes (Van Engen, 1994:248-253).

Qualitative research methodology can also be categorised in three movements:

- participatory observations;
- (un)structured and in-depth interviews; and
- the use of personal documents such as field notes (Dreyer, 1991:247).

1.8.2 Finding conversation partners

My research question developed as a result of the following influences:
● my experiences as a minister in the DRC;
● exposure to the hermeneutical framework of the missional imagination of the missio Dei theology; and
● the embodiment of the missio Dei theology in various programmes, literature and activities within and outside the DRC.

This missional hermeneutic has created an inner tension regarding my white identity and how it is further shaped by a homogeneous white church. Beautiful themes of inclusive diversity relating to gender, generations and spirituality resulting from this missional framework have guided me to also reflect on my (in)ability to live and love across racial boundaries.

To unpack this research question, I needed to find voices from a similar context, validating or countering the inner tensions created by growing deeper into the boundary-crossing imagination of missional theology. For this purpose I conducted interviews with 10 ministers in the DRC. The aims of the interviews were as follows:

● identify themes of racial diversity in the DRC in relation to missional theology;
  and
● determine how these ministers and their faith communities are engaging with these themes.

In Chapter 3 I will expand on the themes identified from these interviews.

I mainly looked at racial diversity in suburban DRC communities, seeing that this research is limited in scope. I have chosen 10 ministers from various DRC contexts, who have mostly worked in suburban communities, or have had a previous history with urban or suburban faith communities. The interviews, for the most part, excluded racial dynamics in rural DRC communities, although there may be overlapping themes and conclusions drawn that will relate to relational dynamics in rural South African contexts.
I am also aware that the selection of ministers for the interviews poses limits on my conclusions.

The ideal would be to conduct comprehensive interviews across a diverse range of ministers in the DRC. Although they do not represent the whole of the DRC, I can at least conclude that the selection of ministers represents an important voice in the DRC. This is the value of using a qualitative research method with in-depth interviews. Although the focus group was limited in quantity, I was able to draw extensive data from these interviews, which can be clustered into various narratives representative of a bigger audience in a suburban context.

1.8.3 Summary of participants’ age, sex and race

Table 1.1: Summary of participants’ age, sex and race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Centurion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>48</td>
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<td>White</td>
<td>Pretoria</td>
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<td>Cape Town</td>
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<td>White</td>
<td>Stellenbosch</td>
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<td>White</td>
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<td>I</td>
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<td>White</td>
<td>Bellville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Randburg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only participant who works in a multi-cultural DRC community
1.8.4 Finding commonality in a focus group

The common denominators between the ministers are the following:

1. None of the participants had any prior information regarding the focus of my research. I only gave feedback on what my research is about at the end of the interview, to ensure that I did not lead the participants in a specific direction.

2. All participants are able to translate their personal experiences in clear reflections and well thought out opinions.

3. The participants are old enough to remember pre-1994 well enough, as well as the transition from the old South Africa to the new South Africa and how their respective faith communities played a role in helping them through this transition.

4. The participants are all white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.

5. The participants are all well informed of the main theological themes of missional theology.

6. All participants have had at least five years of work experience in the DRC.

7. All participants have worked or are still working in a suburban multi-racial context, within a mainly white Afrikaans DRC faith community.

1.8.5 Modelling an interview on informal conversations

As I have mentioned previously, none of the participants had any prior knowledge about the field or the content of my research. Although the consent form that they signed explains what my study is about, this form was only signed after the interview was completed to ensure that the participants were not led to the narratives I hoped to identify.

I wanted the interview to take the form of an informal conversation that happens on a daily basis between ministers of the DRC. In various conversations I have had, apart from the interviews, the ministers theologically reflected on various missional, liturgical,
pastoral and ecclesial dynamics playing out in their respective communities or synods. By asking questions that reflected the style and nature of these conversations, I wanted to see if issues of race, culture, language and diversity are lying under the surface of the ecclesial experiences of these ministers. In some of the interviews I had to nudge and press the conversation to go a bit deeper into these narratives, yet in all of the interviews the conversation developed very quickly into a conversation about whiteness in the DRC within a multi-racial South African society.

The interviews took place in familiar surroundings for the ministers. Locations for the interviews included coffee shops, church offices or private homes. The interviews were done in a relaxed, informal manner, even though a number of formal questions were asked. All of the interviews were recorded and where possible, additional notes were made on certain observations. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. Each interview was thoroughly read. Data clustering was done in order to identify recurring themes and narratives. A summary of this work is attached as Addendum 1.

1.8.6 Two main questions

All of the interviews started with the question: “Tell me more about who you are”. The aim was to see if race, sex, culture and language were on the minds of the participants. Any cultural reference to themselves was adequate for me to draw the conclusion that they see themselves as part of a particular group. It was notable that only two of the participants referred vaguely to themselves in definitions associated with traditional Afrikaner culture.

The second question was about the community and the context in which they live and work. It was surprising to note with this question that themes of race, culture and language were much more on the forefront than when the participants were reflecting about themselves.
The goal of the two opening questions was to identify themes relating to whiteness, diversity, searching for identity amidst loss and similar dynamics within faith communities. I wanted to see whether these themes would surface without asking direct questions relating to these themes. From these two questions I was then guided by the semi-structured style of the interview to actively listen to personal accounts and stories emerging from the conversation.

These two questions were then followed by a series of questions and comments in response to the participant’s reflections on his or her experience in ministry. My role as interviewer was to follow the conversation in a curious way while being led by the participant in our exploration of the themes relevant to this study. I ended all the interviews with the same question: “Do you feel at home in South Africa?”. In Chapter 4 I will explore identity themes regarding whiteness in a post-apartheid South Africa. I will be in conversation with voices such as Antjie Krog, Melissa Steyn and Cobus van Wyngaard.

1.9 Eight stories
I identified eight strong themes regarding racial diversity in the DRC. In the spirit of creativity and with the aim of proposing a missional practice of listening, I have titled these themes “Eight Stories”. I have titled each individual story in an “I / our statement”. This is done intentionally, as I include myself and my own experiences as a minister in the DRC as a prominent part of all of the themes. The eight stories are listed here:

1. I feel at home in South Africa
2. I long for a more colourful congregation
3. My journey across racial boundaries started with an outreach
4. My church is too white
5. Our money is keeping us lily white
6. I anticipate conflict when I pursue this longing in my community
7. It all comes down to leadership
8. Our churches can be creative in crossing racial boundaries

1.10 Argument diagram
The following diagram shows another way to understand how the argument is structured. The diagram also shows the relationship between the research question, the theoretical framework and the qualitative research. In this diagram the theory is responsible for a tension within the interpretation of my own context. This leads to a research question which is then “tested” with 10 other ministers in similar DRC contexts. Out of these interviews flow identity narratives and diversity themes relevant to theory and context. The missional theory and qualitative narratives are then developed further in the light of other whiteness theories.

![Diagram 1.1: Argument structure](image)

1.11 Research limitations
1. This study will limit the focus of diversity to cultural diversity within the context of the DRC. In South African society the options to explore this issue are broad.
2. This study will not reflect on diversity relating to social status, gender, sexuality and age in the DRC.
3. This study will be limited to whiteness studies pertaining to the Afrikaner’s search for identity in a post-apartheid South Africa.
4. Although church unity between the DRC and the URC will surface in some of the conclusions and arguments, this is not a study on church unity between these organisations.

5. My cultural identity as a white missional theologian in a post-apartheid South Africa poses contextual limitations to conclusions made in this study.

6. This study will not research black identity in post-apartheid South Africa.
Chapter 2
God becoming other - the incarnation of the triune God as a hermeneutic for missional congregations

“A closed human being has no hope... A closed society no longer has any future. The nearer we come to Christ, the nearer we come to each other” (Jurgen Moltmann, 1978:35;83).

Chapter outline
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2.1 A short story: Rooibos tea, koeksisters and missional theology

I find myself in the tearoom of a theological seminary. It could be anywhere in the world, but my default imagination lets it play out in the picturesque university town Stellenbosch where I first started my theological training at the turn of the new millennium. There are koeksisters and rooibos tea, with the local newspapers folded open on mainly the sport sections. The image smells of my Afrikaner culture. I am in deep thought. My mind is in conversation with Antjie Krog’s *Begging to be Black* (2009). I grapple with being a minister in an all-white, modern-day Dutch Reformed Church 20 years after apartheid. I am torn between new voices from within and from outside my church urging and inviting the church out of the shadows of the past into the sunlight of a rainbow theology; and cultural longings for safety and identity amidst a growing sense of disconnection and displacement. How do I move with God, yet keep holding the hands of my congregation?

As I pour my tea and reach for a koeksister, the door of the tea room opens and in walks David Bosch. I feel a sense of pride as the old theologian strolls into the room. His world-renowned work on missional theology is in his hands. My pride is warped. I sense that it has something to do with the fact that this beautiful theologian shaped the international Christian community in a profound way, yet he is Afrikaans like me. “Een van ons dam se eende”, I hear a familiar voice echo. He hands me the book with the words: “Eat the pages. It will be sweet in your mouth like the koeksister, yet hard to swallow unlike the tea you are drinking.” The old theologian smells of mission trips and earnest conversations with God. He sips his tea and remarks on the rugby news.

The door opens a second time and in walks a group of contemporary theologians who have each in their own way shaped the missional imagination of theology in such an inviting, creative way that their thoughts and ideas about the *missio Dei* have trickled down to the everyday liturgical rhythms of DRC communities all over South Africa. They
have inspired ministers and church members to rethink what it means to be church in a new South African context.

I make another cup of rooibos tea.

The door opens again. In walks one of my favourite authors, Kester Brewin. His book *Other* (2010) stirred new thoughts about the incarnation of Christ and how God needed to become human for God’s own sake. The opening words of his book caught me off guard, made me read the book in the first place: “I might be wrong”. I introduce him to David Bosch and some of the others. Seems like everybody knows old professor Bosch. I feel foolish for my assumption, yet the familiar feeling of pride sets in.

Someone asks me what I am reading. “Antjie Krog’s Begging to be Black”, I answer sheepishly. I notice for the first time that around the koeksisters and tea I am surrounded only by white men like me. Some older, some from elsewhere, yet all of them very much like myself.

The door opens again. A group of rowdy young men and women, mostly black, walk in. They are friends of mine from a beautiful NGO community: Oasis South Africa. Suddenly the conversation gains momentum. I think we will run out of koeksisters.

2.2 Content summary

- Shifts in missional theology invites a new imagination of who God is and what God is doing.
- The sending nature of the triune God is the theological backdrop for a missional ecumenical imagination of the church.
- The incarnation of Christ invites missional churches to embody a posture of humility in doing missions “together”.
- Crossing boundaries is a central theme in missional theology.
● The complex racial society of a post-apartheid South Africa makes boundary crossing a sensitive, yet very important, activity of the church.

● South African society needs safe spaces for storytelling and deep attentive listening. Missional churches can play a vital role in creating these spaces.

2.3 Chapter outcome

In this chapter I will explore dominant shifts in missiology that have cultivated a new, fresh, vibrant missional imagination in churches such as the DRC. I will also highlight some of the theological components that guide this hermeneutic to interpret the gospel in ways that invite the church from a bounded homogeneity to an inclusive diversity.

Van Wyngaard (2014) identifies in this missional imagination a dominant theme for crossing cultural, social, gender, age and racial boundaries. This “crossing of boundaries” has the potential to cultivate a missional ecclesiology with an ethos of humility and hospitality, which in turn can be in conflict with older bounded identities. In Chapter 3 I will show how this missional hermeneutic is responsible for a creative tension in DRC communities. Roxburgh writes that our “social imaginaries create a taken-for-granted set of common assumptions about our normal expectations and common understandings around how things work and how we’re supposed to act in the world” (2011:59). I believe there is a clash of “common assumptions and expectations” between old Afrikaner paradigms and fresh missional paradigms. It is a domestic battle in our language houses.

I will show that missional theology challenges the set boundaries of homogeneous cultures and invites communities to adopt incarnational postures of humility that “listen people into speech” (Roxburgh, 2011:175).
2.4 Missional imaginary

Social hermeneutics has been drawing the attention of missional theologians. Alan Roxburgh explains that Charles Taylor’s use of the term “social imaginary” refers to the ways in which people are formed by basic kinds of stories that plays out in the background of their lives “like the props in a stage play.”

In the following paragraphs I will show how fresh imaginations in missional theology have been cultivating a vibrant missional imaginary in DRC communities, leading to a new conscious and unconscious “set of values and principles” (Roxburgh, 2011:59) that has the potential to shape a missional ecclesiology. Brian D. Russell (2010) defines this framework as an “interpretive approach that privileges mission as the key to reading the Scriptures… A missional hermeneutic seeks to hear the Scriptures as an authoritative guide to God’s mission in the world so that communities of faith can participate fully in God’s mission.”

2.5 Building a new language house

In the last 60 years, the ecumenical church has slowly been learning a new missional language. Alan Roxburgh in his book Missional: Joining God in the neighbourhood (2013) critiques whether the church, especially the North American church, has really learnt a new missional language, or rather like a tourist visiting a different country, learnt only a few sentences to get what they need. Heidegger’s (1994:236-7) metaphor for language as “the house of being” helps to understand how important a change in tongue is. The ability of a change in tongue to bring about big changes in praxis, is stressed with Heidegger’s understanding that we become what we speak. Roxburgh (2013:61) reflects on this through the work of Branson:

“A community’s imagination, its stories and practices, its history and expectations — these are created and carried by words that interpret everything. We are constructed by and live our lives in and through language; not language as we
have come to understand it as a tool, as positivism or propaganda, but more like a “house of language”.

Roxburgh (2013:61) explains further that we all live in “complex houses of language, shaped out of multiple, competing stories about what it means to be human and what are the true sources of the self.” This research will reflect on the tensions between the language houses of missional theology and white identity in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Peter Block (2009:281) supports similar theories through interpreting Werner Erhard’s insights in thinking and learning. Block (2009:281) argues that a shift in speaking and listening is the essence of transformation.

“If we have any desire to create an alternative future, it is only going to happen through a shift in our language. If we want a change in culture, for example, the work is to change the conversation — or, more precisely, to have a conversation that we have not had before, one that has the power to create something new in the world.

Block (2009:281) goes on to explain that this insight guides us to reflect on the “value of our stories, the positions we take, our love of the past, and our way of being in the world.”

In this chapter I explore the missional language house that has been beautifully designed by a renewed appreciation for a trinitarian God, that has been built on the foundations of the incarnated Christ and decorated by the creative spirit of God with the aim of making the house more welcoming to the stranger.
2.6 A change in tongue

2.6.1 The church gave the mission back to God

Eugene Peterson’s (2002) interpretation of Romans 3:28 captures a shift in missional thinking that I explore in this chapter. “What we’ve learned is this: God does not respond to what we do; we respond to what God does. We’ve finally figured it out. Our lives get in step with God and all others by letting him set the pace, not by proudly or anxiously trying to run the parade (Peterson 2002).

God is the first (missionary) and the last (missionary). “God sent himself, he is his own missionary… Missional is about God, not the church” (Roxburgh and Boren, 2009:91,94). These words echo the deep truth of what David Bosch’s understanding of missions is all about. According to Bosch (2011:381) this understanding in missional theology started in the 1950s. It was deeply influenced by Barthian theology and reached a high point at the Willingen Conference of the International Missionary Council. Bosch continues that the classical doctrine on the *missio Dei* as God the Father sending the Son, and God the Father and the Son sending the Spirit was “expanded to include yet another “movement”: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit sending the church into the world” (Bosch, 2011:381, I9459).

Tom Smith in his book *Raw Spirituality: The Rhythms of the Jesus Life* (2014) echoes this shift in missiology:

“In recent decades the church has rediscovered the missional nature of God. This is called the missio Dei. Because we serve a God who is missional, our churches are an extension of God’s sending nature.

At the heart of this shift in missional theology is the belief that whatever the church is doing, God is already doing it. Missiology is not an activity of the church; rather it is God
as Trinity constantly living, breathing, creating, working, loving, caring, healing and judging in this world for the sake of all of life here on earth.

Dallas Willard (2014:447-449) frames this as follows: “A loving and omnipotent God is now ruling.” Willard writes that God has “a holistic vision for human life that necessarily includes all the political, economic, and social realms — not just religious realms — along with the innumerable personal kingdoms that compose all human activity.”

Bosch, with the help of Aagaard (2011:381,l9468), goes deeper than missio Dei as God acting and sending: “In the new image mission is not primarily an activity of the church, but an attribute of God. God is a missionary God.” Mission is an attribute of God. It is rooted in who God is, more than in what God or the church is doing. To do missions, the church needs to know God. Mission then becomes an act of worship. It is a confessional act, rooted in liturgy, “fleshed out” (Bosch, 2011:361,l8977) in the ordinary life of the faithful. When the church engages in missiology it is not a separate act from systematic theology. Instead, it flows out of deep theological confessions about who God is and what God is doing.

These developments in missiology over the last 60 years are shaping the missional imagination of the ecumenical church in a profound way. Bosch (2011:382) claims that it is not just in the Protestant tradition that these changes have taken place, but in “virtually all Christian persuasions.” These changes in missional thinking has a deep impact on how churches view themselves and their role in God’s kingdom. The church is not the carrier of God into the dark heathen world. It never was. In this understanding of missiology, the church is not the protagonist in an epic drama, but the supporting act; or rather, the church is the musicians in a grand orchestra and God is the director.
2.6.2 Trinitarian missional hermeneutic

The theology (God-language) of the Trinity cultivates a multi-layered hermeneutic for the church. Trinitarian missiology celebrates the story of creation, reconciliation and transformation. H. Mathias Zahnise (1989) wrote that to look at the Trinity as a model of how God carries out his mission in the world contributes to our own attempts to cooperate with God in mission. He explains that these “convictions implied in the belief in God the Father provide a motivation for mission that can be strong and humble in a pluralistic world” (1989:2).

A trinitarian missional interpretation defines the world through the universal love that God the Father and Creator has for all his creatures that inspires the followers of his Son to share the gospel.

“The lostness of the unreached is not the fundamental motivation for reaching out. Rather, the outreach of the one Lord of heaven and earth compels our mission to those who have not heard. "You are lost and we are not" is an affirmation that leads away from identity and humility. "You are loved, as are we, by the Lord of heaven and earth!" is an affirmation without arrogance” (Zahnise, 1989:2).

The “inclusiveness” of God the Father is what Zahnise (1989) identifies as the best motivation for being church in the world, in stark contrast to older missional paradigms that labelled the world as dark and lost, in need of being saved. In a pluralistic world, a world of “multivision and multiclaim” (1989:3), the theology of the Trinity invites the church not only to a missional interpretation of (sacred) text and context, but also to adopt a missional posture of humility and appreciation.
A trinitarian missional language house cultivates a community that loves all of creation, from nature conservation to exciting new developments in all scientific fields. Willard (2014:465) writes:

“God, through his Spirit, is to guide us personally, communally, socially, politically, and economically into direct conformity with the blessing that is within his kingdom. We simply have not thought very long or hard about how the kingdom of God could, would, or does manifest itself within ideas and images that drive the current contexts of our church, work, school, play, family, business, health, and economic activities.”

A trinitarian missional interpretation that responds to the invitation of the incarnation of the Son adopts postures of self-emptying, identification, and participation (Zahnise, 1989:2). It is deeply concerned with locality and context. It engages gracefully with the stories of ordinary people in all walks of life. Roxburgh (2011:71;132) calls this “the discovering of the concreteness of the ordinary.” He goes further by predicting (prophesying) that it will be “among the ordinary people of God, the nameless people who never stand on stages or get their photo in the newspaper where God’s boundary-breaking future will emerge.”

Eugene Peterson’s (2002) paraphrasing of Romans 12 echoes the “concreteness of the ordinary”. Paul writes to the community in Romans, imploring them to take their “everyday, ordinary life — your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life — and place it before God as an offering.”

A trinitarian missional interpretation asks what the spirit of God is doing. This “interpretation lens” has shaped ministers and communities to interpret scripture (and context) creatively by asking, for instance, “What is God up to?”. Roxburgh (2011:26,27) elaborates on this method of discernment: “When we are truly seeking to know what it
means to be God’s people, we will want to know what God is up to in our neighbourhoods and communities and what it means for the gospel to be lived out and proclaimed in this time and place. Now we are in a place where ecclesiology isn’t the issue. Missiology is.” In the DRC, the creative input of learning networks such as Communitas and discernment practices such as *Dwelling in the Word* (developed by Pat Ellison and Patrick Keifert from Church Innovations (2008)) have helped to cultivate this missional awareness that God is doing beautiful things in the world and invites the church to participate in this.

2.6.3 Exploring the chaos of the Trinity

God is not safe. Roxburgh (2011) refers to the Holy Spirit as the “boundary-breaking Spirit.” He says that work of the Spirit creates “conflict, consternation, and confusion.” It can be an exciting exercise to allow the missional imagination to explore these chaos themes within the Trinity:

- In the Trinity we find a Father sending his son on a death mission.
- We find the Son asking young people to join in on a movement that will surely end in their own deaths.
- We find a Spirit “casting out” the Beloved One into the great unknown, the dangerous wilderness, to be exposed to evil.
- We find the Son that is abandoned by the Father, left to go to hell, crying out why he is forsaken by the one who is meant to protect him.
- We find the Son carrying the sins of the world before the face of the sinless Father.
- A healthy community modelled on the Trinity is not without differences and disappointments. Relationships and community are not without tensions and conflict.

These narratives and themes can add depth to the language of the *missio Dei*, helping the church to understand that God’s mission is not safe, predictable or easy. When
Christ beckons us to follow him, we are sure to experience a great sense of loss, suffering and conflict.

2.6.4 Loving God’s otherness, yet grounded by Christ

God is the first stranger the church encounters on the missional road (often the church will mistake God for someone else). The tricky thing about theology is we constantly default God to our own likeness, thus befriending God too quickly as one of “us”. We frame God in our “conscious set of values”, as Roxburgh refers to it (2011). Brewin (2010:93-106) writes poetically about this danger of God being bound to us. It is easier to love a God that resonates my view on life; a God that hears my cries and responds in a like minded manner that is familiar to my spirituality and cultural inner workings. “We have house-trained God. We have localised, accommodated and claimed ownership of God”, claims Brewin (2010:101).

As I search for a theological framework to deal with my identity in a post-apartheid South Africa these words have a profound impact on my journey towards a missional inclusive theology. I am reminded of my own “house”, the one in which I have domesticated (a) god. This house has shaped me in such a way that when I “dream” of being in conversation with theologians speaking on behalf of God, the dominant voices are white males from a western Christian context. It is not their fault. They are who they are and the fact that their writings find an easier way into my heart says more about me than about them. I, however, need to acknowledge this uncomfortable truth. I am white and my God is white. In Chapter 4 I will explore these dominant white themes shaping my own understanding of God and the world in relation to popular discourse on whiteness in South Africa and the search for identity in a post-apartheid society.

Yet God is not bound by my race, language, culture, money, sex, education and place in society. Brewin (2010:96) helps by saying that we are called to love the God who is other, who will not be bound by the destructive lifestyles that we pray are preserved. As
theologians our first words about God should echo Brewin’s (2010) opening line of his book *Other: Loving Self, God and Neighbour in World of Fractures*: “We might be wrong.” In a similar way, Roxburgh and Boren (2009:94) echo this sentiment: “God is transcendent and beyond our comprehension.” Moltmann (1978:17) warns that without a “religion of God’s freedom”, the church will lack in theology of justice and compassion. Missional theology should be guided by this warning, towards a theology of humility.

Brewin holds the tension well when he writes that the flip side of domesticating God is to deny God’s power to act and ability to work through us at all (2010:103). Roxburgh and Boren (2009:93) call this flipside a theology of “myopia”. Brewin shares an honest story of how an ordinary question to a local community showed their lack of practical awareness regarding God’s local mission for their community. He was part of the Vaux community, which was known for their exploration of the strange otherness of God. A minister came to see what they are doing and asked: “Where is the soup kitchen?”. The question grounded their community in a very concrete reality about what it means to be and do church within a community where people are hungry.

The life rhythm of a faith community that is rooted in the triune God’s incarnate expression in Jesus Christ includes rhythms of prayer, silence and creative artistic expressions, yet also active conversations, shared meals, hospitality towards the stranger, social activism, restorative justice, crossing racial boundaries, confessions of systemic and structural sins, forgiveness, grace and soup kitchens.

The theological journey towards embracing God’s unboundedness, acknowledging the God as the First Stranger and imitating God’s own way of embracing the other, should then always be grounded in the crucified and resurrected Christ. Outside of Jesus, our journey with God cannot be missional. The unknown otherness of God is made known through knowing Jesus. It is what Billings calls “union with Christ” (2012:61). The *missio Dei* is grounded by the incarnation of Christ. In one sense unlocked for a deeper
understanding, and in another sense locked for a bounded, framed understanding from where we find a starting point and possibly the point of return.

2.6.5 Incarnation as missional posture

God’s first missional movement was to become a stranger unto Himself, to move into the unknown. The incarnation invites a creative tension into our understanding of God. The all-knowing God not knowing. The One who “rules on high” choosing humility. The King of kings becoming a slave amongst men. The One in whom all things move and live, choosing a life of poverty. The immortal One dying.

Brewin (2010:106) explores the incarnation, hinting that God needed the incarnation to become fully God. Brewin draws from Zizek: “that argued that Christ had to emerge to reveal God not only to humanity, but to God himself.” “The doctrine of the Trinity is not simply about God in community with God”, continues Brewin. This understanding invites the missional theologian into a deeper reflection on why God acts as a missional God.

The missio Dei is not just for the sake of the world, but also for God’s sake. Traditional atonement themes gain a fresh new understanding: God crossed the boundary from “heaven to earth”, from “sacred to ordinary”, from “holy to unholy” not just to save the sinner, but also the Sinless. In this understanding, the church is invited into a reflection on how God matured by becoming a father and also by redeeming heaven through embracing earth. God needed to step out, cross the threshold, break through his own preference and learn not only to love the other, but become the other. God invites the church to learn from God’s journey towards the stranger.

These themes can serve as important beacons for a framework to delve deeper into the missio Dei. It invites the church to adopt postures that counter dominant outdated colonial paradigms of power and triumphalism. It shapes the missional church towards maturity where themes of vulnerability, suffering and simplicity are not viewed as threats
or failures, but rather important movements along the way of Jesus. More importantly, it shapes the church to embrace the stranger. Firstly, God as the strange Other, unbound and free from our longings for familiarity, safety and predictability.

If we hold this interpretation for a moment, then (re)reading Paul’s song to the Philippian church, we gain a different understanding on why we need the same “mind as Christ”:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (King James Version).

We first need this downward mind of Christ not for the sake of the other, but for the sake of the self. The incarnated missio Dei first transforms the missionary, then the mission field. The invitation for the praxis of missiology in a trinitarian theology, which is fleshed out by Christ’s incarnation, is to be a movement towards humility. In the heart of the incarnated Trinity we find a humble God embracing the otherness of humanity. Zahnise (1989:3) defines the incarnation of Christ as God communicating across cultural boundaries. Developing this further, he says that humility is what is needed in a pluralistic society (1989:5).

This thinking brings the theological concept of kenosis to the forefront. Derived from the Greek word for emptiness (κένωσις, kénōsis), it sets the table for self-sacrificial values such as humility.

The DRC’s general assembly formulated a framework document for missional churches in 2011. The document highlights this incarnational posture of kenosis as an important embodiment of the missional imagination. Billings (2012:60) explains that we must
adopt Jesus’ nature with his sender, a nature of obedience and utter dependence. In Chapter 4 I will explore how the language house of whiteness competes against a kenosis way of life.

The incarnation also invites creative imaginations of God changing address, God moving into a different neighbourhood, God residing in a new language house. Adopting the incarnational posture of the triune God is to break down the dominant language homes we live in and move into the language home of the kingdom of God. The incarnation is the invitation to “metanoia”, to change “minds”, to learn the language of the kingdom of God as taught by Jesus.

2.6.6 Incarnation as (in)colonialism

There should also be a warning regarding the use of language disguised as incarnational, yet the missional agenda of the one speaking is still influenced by the outdated theologies shaped by structures of power and colonialism or consumerism. The latter is what Roxburgh (2011:59) identifies as the dominant language house for western Christians.

When I try to “incarnate” or too easily claim this “mind of Christ” for myself when I engage with people from other cultures, persuasions, religions and socio-economic contexts, this downward movement is warped, because I end up with a god complex. This “mind” is not the mind of Christ. It is merely a repetition of colonial and neocolonial views and values. Rieger (2004:210) warns against the old link between power and missions.

Rieger explains that, even though formal colonialism has ended long ago, it can still be evident in the way churches “do” mission. The DRC’s link between colonialism, apartheid and missions needs very little explanation. As a missionary from this historical tradition, I am aware of how the certain ways of apartheid thinking are evident in my life.
and are subtly shaping my missional imagination. If I am unaware of this, then my “embracing” of the incarnational language will be like sugarcoating arsenic. Sweet at first, but deadly in the outcome. It’s the danger of turning outreach into downreach.

This flawed incarnational theology makes missions an activity only for the rich, the “godly”, those in power; the churches with the resources and the professionals who want and can “give” to the needy. It becomes a farce. It results in (neo)exploitation of the other for the sake of my own spiritual maturity and growth.

Billings (2012:60) brings another stern warning to this conversation. He warns against using the incarnation of Christ as a “model for ministry”. In his article he shares his own personal experiences and struggles in cross-cultural ministry and missions relating to current conversations on how to “copy” the incarnation of Christ for ministry:

“The New Testament makes strong claims about the “missions” of the Son and Spirit in the world. This makes the sending of the church fundamentally derivative and subordinate. We are adopted into Christ by the Spirit; we do not have a divine nature, like the incarnate Christ, but only a human nature… Christ lives in us by the Spirit. But a biblical account of union with Christ is clear that we are not Christ; we are not an ongoing incarnation in the world” (Billings 2012:60).

Critical reflection in missional theology plays an important role in helping missional churches not only to track the fresh footprints of God in this world, but also to tread lightly in order not to confuse our own footprints with those of God. To know what God is up to, we need to know which footprints to track.

To conclude: Christ has gone before me, despite of me, without me. I am, however, invited by Christ to embody a different posture in this world. The posture of being led, of serving others, of shutting up, of listening, showing my vulnerability, being local, loving
the neighbourhood, being taught, being challenged, shaped, formed, hurt, disappointed, hated and even killed.

2.6.7 Christ dances between boundaries

“[B]oundaries, to those who have experience crossing them, become a matter of play rather than an obsession” - Jan Nederveen Pieterse and Bhikhu Parekh (Steyn:2001:149).

Core to the language of missions is the theme of crossing borders. A short-term mission is commonly called an “outreach”. The idea of reaching out to someone in need, in pain, is a prominent theme in missions. This “reaching out” journey has the potential to cultivate an awareness towards cross-cultural diversity, racism and social (in)justice in the liturgy (daily rhythms of the faithful), inviting the community into an awareness of the complex layeredness of (especially) the diverse South African context.

Van Wyngaard points this out in the personal testimony of Klippies Kritzinger’s journey towards embracing a more nuanced South African identity and living a life breaking down racist structures. He quotes theologian Zuze Banda reflecting on the young Kritzinger’s involvement in an Indian group area as a “conversion”. Van Wyngaard concludes that “these experiences at times provide the door to a deeper and critical engagement of whiteness and a political stance against racist structures.”

As I argued earlier, the diverse theology of the Trinity becomes a central component of missional reflections. God’s deep identity is diverse. The perichoresis of the Trinity invites a creative movement for the church, not only between theological concepts and identities, but more so a creative movement across social boundaries. At the start of this chapter I showed how the missional paradigm has shifted to a theological awareness about who God is and how God’s identity shapes mission. In the Trinity, the relational metaphors invites the church towards inclusivity regarding age, gender, class and race.
Roxburgh reflects on the work of the Spirit and calls this “the boundary-breaking work of the Spirit”. He says that the Spirit is breaking boundaries because God is about to do “something in the world that is far bigger than the confines of an ethnotribal religion even if that ethnotribal religion is the Judaism of the Scriptures.” He explains that there is a “cosmic scope to this gospel, and the Spirit will not leave the church forever sitting inside its well-defined boxes that try to determine what God can do in the world.”

The more the church asks what God is doing, the more boundaries the church will cross along the way. These boundaries not only relate to racial and cultural boundaries within the Christian imagination, but also crossing religious boundaries. Missional theology invites the church to truly meet God on the “other side”. In Chapter 4 I will show that an ethos capable of celebrating other identities different from one’s own familiar framework is beneficial and even crucial to the success of a pluralistic society such as South Africa.

Crossing the boundary does not always mean that the boundary is removed. Saying that will be naive. I propose a movement between boundaries. Being a bridge between worlds. Constantly tampering with the wall. Pleading with our neighbours to keep the walls low and where trust is established also a friendly gate or two so that movement between worlds are possible.

I am reminded of the poem Mending Wall, by Robert Frost. “There is something there that doesn’t love a wall...” The poet reflects on the uncomfortable yet inescapable relationship he has with the wall between him and his neighbour. Nature and mysterious creatures keep breaking down the wall. He tries to show his neighbour that only cows need walls. The identities of the two neighbours differ a lot. The one grows apples, the other pine trees. There are strongly developed differences between the two men and the walls try to limit the movement between these identities, yet there is something that
encourages this movement, pleads for a more open society, removes stones to make holes for light, air and small animals to pass through.

As a minister in the DRC, I feel like this poet. There’s a God that doesn’t like a wall. All around I see in my community walls constantly being built. Some physical, others on a relational and emotional level. Our South African society, although officially freed from the formal boundaries that separated white from black, are now being clearly defined by physical boundaries separating rich from poor and in many cases still white from black. In this bounded society, the Holy Spirit moves between the walls, in some cases breaking down the walls, in other cases teaching people the skills of climbing fences, elsewhere giving people the keys (or rather the remotes) to the gate, cultivating trust and confidence to move to the other side, even if it is for a moment, to return again to a place of familiarity and perceived safety.

2.6.8 Bounded and centred sets

Alan Hirsch and Debra Hirsch (2010:152-153) take social set theory and apply it to congregations. In this framework there are two types of gathering: the “bounded set” and the “centred set” (see Diagrams 2.1 and 2.2 below). At a theological conference in Stellenbosch, (17/09/2014) Dirkie Smit compared avocados and coconuts as metaphors relating to this theory.

![Diagram 2.1: A visual representation of a bounded set](image)
Paul’s relationship with the people of Athens in Acts 17 can be a guiding text for further reflection on these two ways of being a congregation. The narrative starts with Paul being “greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols” (NIV, Acts 17:16). As the story unfolds, we see Paul warming up to the people of Athens’ longings for God. He starts to validate God’s presence in their lives in such a way that he parts ways with his own cultural and religious beliefs, which make up the core of his understanding of God. As the conversation draw closer to the crucified and resurrected Christ, so the point of return becomes more clear. In the end, some wanted to hear more, while others “sneered”.

In this narrative we find a dance between God’s mission being open ended, validating and accommodating. Paul learnt the missional skill of finding God’s footprints in the lives of the “other”. He allowed God to be unbounded to his Jewish worldview and even surprise him with the deep spirituality of the people of Athens. Yet, his missional dialogue was grounded in Christ. It was the starting point and the point of return. In the end, after seeing God in a different culture, yet binding that culture to Jesus Christ, Paul parted ways with some who did not want to engage further with Jesus.

Paul did not model his ministry on a dogmatic bounded set. His missional imagination resembled the centred set that Hirsch describes, as well as Collin’s metaphors. Paul
understood that through Jesus, God’s mission is a gift across all religious, social, racial and class boundaries. N.T. Wright (1992:361) underlines it as follows: “Christianity advocated a love which cut across racial boundaries…”

2.6.9 Listening each other into speech

One of the “wall tampering skills” that the Spirit teaches the church, is the discipline of “respectful listening to one another”. This discipline is rooted in the understanding that the missio Dei, fleshed out through a trinitarian and incarnational theology, invites Christians on a journey towards listening to the other. This act of listening is sometimes referred to as discernment. Jurgens Hendriks (2001), in Studying Congregations in Africa, highlights this missional act of listening as the key discipline of the missional church. It is the process of listening to the sounds of these rhythmic workings, catching the beat, learning to dance to God’s music. Discernment is the first step in a beautiful dance between God and the world.

Roxburgh and Boren (2009:92) define theology as “talk about God”. “Being part of God’s missional people means that we are speaking about who God is and what God is doing in this world within a specific context.” If discernment is such a big part of theology, then it might be better to say that theology is “listening with others to God”. They (Roxburgh and Boren 2009:92) then draw from Robert Schreiter’s work, Constructing Local Theologies, wherein he identifies three types of theology:

- community theology;
- prophetic and poetic theology; and
- outsider theology.

A common thread of dialogue and listening runs through the development of these three theologies. The church is in conversation with the neighbourhood, engaging the local police, schools, medical institutions, community forums and other faith communities. The church creates spaces in partnership with and sometimes for the poets, writers,
artists, journalists and architects of the community. These spaces become important platforms through which the church discern the voice of God. The church intentionally listens to the outsider. In any context, in any community, owing to our boundedness of being human, we will create insiders and outsiders. Churches’ tendency is one of “reiterating what we already know and not seeing much else… every denomination and local church tend toward insider thinking” (Roxburgh and Boren, 2009:93).

Central to developing a communal theology and developing a missional liturgy within the “local life” of the community is the question: “What is God up to?” (Roxburgh and Boren, 2009:92). This question has been a central theological discernment discipline in the church where I work as a pastor.

Another community whose practices will feature in Chapter 5 is Oasis South Africa (Oasis SA is non-profit organisation linked to Oasis International). In Oasis’ daily discernment journey this question is preceded by a deeper theological reflection: “what image(s) of God do I hold dear?”. Oasis members understand that doing missional work in a specific community is in response to a deeper faith journey with God.

We also understand that there are a lot of dangers in our tendencies for warped theological paradigms born from our need to domesticate God, as Brewin (2010:110) explains. This question we ask on a regular basis in community. Oasis SA as an organisation is diverse in culture and age, thus making our conversations about God colourful. We have aligned our practices with what I call a dance between community theology and outsider theology as understood by Roxburgh and Boren (2009:92-93).

In community we listen to one another speaking, praying, reflecting on who God is. Our community’s diversity gives us another dimension, listening deeply to the stranger. By being a multi-cultural community with a common ethos shaped by respect, humility and contextual awareness, we as individuals speak about God, aware of our unique
upbringings and social backgrounds. It shapes our theologies not just by communal and contextual relationships, but also through diverse voices of others that do not belong to our immediate circle.

In a similar way, Reggie Nel (2013:170) draws from Biko’s challenge to church leaders in search of an alternative to what Biko called the “appalling irrelevance of the interpretation of scripture by professionals.” “Biko, being black, youth and a layman, concludes this exposition of his consciousness, then with this important challenge, not only for the church leaders present, but also for those researchers, i.e., the interpretation or the “re-examination of Christianity”. He suggests an alternative, a reading strategy which is communal, but also, rooted in the perspectives and questions from young people of the emerging youth and student movements of his time.”

These acts of listening are what Roxburgh and Boren (2009:93) call “weaving together”. “It is the process of using conversations to interweave the gospel into every aspect of local life.” There is obviously a lot of weaving happening in faith communities. The challenge is to weave the voices of the stranger in between the voices of old friends. When our listening is framed with a sensitivity to pick up on the subtle themes of the triune God’s missional incarnation through Christ, the Holy Spirit surprises the church through the lives, stories, questions, longings and choices of a diversity of people in and around the community of the faithful. If this listening is shaped by the posture of the incarnated Christ, the church will hear God’s voice speaking through the least of these.

In Chapter 5, I will explore the concept of listening as missional exercise for churches in more depth.

2.7 Conclusion
Developments in missional theology have cultivated a vibrant imagination of who God is and what God is up to. When the “language home” of the church is shaped by the
sending nature of the triune God, the incarnation of Christ becomes a model for missiona

nal churches to embody a posture of humility in a pluralistic society. God’s embracing of God’s own otherness invites the church to be more open, inclusive and hospitable. In Christ, churches are able to “do” missions “together”.

At the heart of this social imaginary lies a powerful theme of crossing boundaries. The complex racial society of post-apartheid South Africa makes boundary crossing a sensitive, yet very important, activity of the church. Churches need to be aware of old colonial imaginaries that have shaped missiology for too long, leading to postures of dominance and power. An incarnational imaginary can counter these outdated postures. Missional churches that are shaped by the imagination that churches should embody the diversity of the Trinity and the incarnational heart of God, should create safe spaces for storytelling and attentive listening.
Chapter 3

Eight Stories: DRC ministers reflect on diversity in the church

Chapter outline

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3.2 Introduction
3.3 Chapter outcomes
3.4 Finding conversation partners
3.5 Finding commonality in a focus group
3.6 Semi-structured conversational interviews
3.7 Two main questions
3.8 Interlocutors
3.9 Eight stories
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   3.9.2 Story 2: I long for a more colourful congregation
   3.9.3 Story 3: My journey across racial boundaries started with an outreach
   3.9.4 Story 4: My church is too white (still the “bastion of the Afrikaner”)
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   3.9.8 Story 8: Our churches can be creative in crossing racial boundaries
3.10 Conclusions

3.1 A short story

Johan is a young minister in a suburban Dutch Reformed Church that used to have a soup kitchen. Used to. Not anymore. They stopped serving food from the church property a few months ago. In the past, when it was up and running, the church gave on average 100 people a warm meal every day. In Johan’s community, this was one of the very few places where a person living in poverty could find a free meal. Johan, although
being critical about hand-out charities, felt proud of being part of a community that cares for people in need.

“So why did your church stop doing it?”

He stared into his empty coffee cup while tapping with the teaspoon on the palm of his hand.

“The office ladies closed it down. Since the xenophobic attacks in 2008, the amount of people who came for a meal almost tripled. The more people came, the more unsafe some of the people in the office started to feel. In the hope to make people feel at ease about the soup kitchen’s presence, we decided to ask the local police authorities to do a background check on every person receiving a meal at the church.”

Johan’s telling of the story is interrupted by the waiter refilling our cups with steaming hot coffee.

“Black. No milk please.” She turns and tends to the other tables.

“And then?”

“Out of the approximate 100 people who were tested, only one person had a criminal record. I felt so ashamed, but can you imagine how those people must have felt? They came to our church because they believed that we would take care of them. What they found instead of our care, was our suspicion and fear. Even after receiving this information from the police, the church office personnel still felt unsafe. In the end, we made a decision to stop the soup kitchen altogether, even though no incident occurred to warrant such a decision.”
“Why then did they feel unsafe?

“Because the people that came for soup were black.”

3.2 Introduction

Being a minister, a pastor, a clergyman or a priest can be a lonely affair. Even working in a multi-pastoral team at a macro-suburban church, it often feels as if you are on your own. Reading theology helps, but can also add to the feeling of loneliness, especially if what you read is at odds with what you see.

I have read missional theology and attended missional conferences, workshops, task teams, and various church meetings. I have listened to sermons on missional theology. I have celebrated exciting developments in the DRC. I am deeply influenced by a vibrant missional theology developing in the DRC. My own story is shaped daily by friends who are some of the missiologists behind these developments in the DRC.

I have enjoyed fine South African wines with Nelus Niemandt and litres of coffee with Tom Smith. I have experienced ministry with Reggie Nel, listened to Annelie Bosch share stories about her husband, walked the streets of Johannesburg with Cobus van Wyngaard, choked on a big cigar belonging to Patrick Keifert and sat with Alan and Debra Hirsch in a small room lamenting the big walls around the Johannesburg suburban homes.

My missional imagination has been turned upside down a few times in the last 10 years, leaving me at odds every now and then with the everyday liturgical life of the congregation where I work. I started to sense a growing tension between what I read, discuss and hear in the “hallways of missiology” and what I see happening in, not only my congregation or in others I often visit, but also what I read and hear on the news, the street corners, the braais and the pre-drinks at the many weddings I attend.
As a church, we have embraced a boundary-crossing theology, yet it seems our society is becoming more and more divided. The boundaries between different groups are growing. Over the last five years the DRC has developed a missional theology that encourages its congregations toward hospitality, openness and inclusivity, yet its members have spent thousands of rands building walls and security structures to keep strangers out of their private lives. Twenty years after 1994, it seems that previously predominantly white communities are still very much homogeneous. Not by chance, but by choice. I am curious about the tension between this reality and our theology.

3.3 Chapter outcomes

In this chapter I will report on the story of nine interviews with 10 different pastors of the DRC. This chapter will plot eight narratives identified from these conversational interviews. I will show that a number of ministers in the DRC have a positive attitude regarding their identity in South Africa, yet feel frustrated by the white-only identity of their faith communities. I am interested how the growing missional hermeneutic in the DRC plays a role in the abovementioned tension, as well as how these conversations relate to studies on post-apartheid white identity.

For this purpose I will also refer to recent developments on diversity in the DRC on synod level and how a recent newspaper article captured the spirit of these decisions by the 2014 Highveld Synod. In this chapter I will unpack the conversations in recurring themes and narratives. The chapter will conclude with reflections in the light of the missional imaginary of Chapter 2. I will also introduce some of the themes on whiteness relating to the interviews in this chapter, which will then be reflected upon in more depth in Chapter 4.
3.4 Finding conversation partners

I conducted interviews with 10 ministers in the DRC. The aims of the interviews were as follows:

- identify themes of racial diversity in the DRC in relation to missional theology;
- and
- determine how these ministers and their faith communities are engaging with these themes.

I have chosen 10 ministers from various DRC contexts who have mostly worked in suburban communities, or have had previous experience in urban or suburban faith communities. The interviews, for the most part, excluded racial dynamics in rural DRC communities, although there may be overlapping themes and conclusions drawn that will relate to relational dynamics in rural South African contexts. I am also aware that the selection of ministers for the interviews poses limits on my conclusions.

The ideal would be to conduct comprehensive interviews across a diverse range of ministers in the DRC. For the purpose of this research, I have only chosen 10 ministers from contexts similar to my own. Although they do not represent the whole of the DRC, I can at least conclude that they represent an important voice in the DRC.

3.5 Finding commonality in a focus group

The common denominators between the ministers are the following:

- None of the participants had any prior information regarding the focus of my research. I only gave feedback on what my research is about at the end of the interview, to ensure that I did not lead the participants in a specific direction.
- All participants are able to translate their personal experiences in clear reflections and well thought out opinions.
• The participants are old enough to remember pre-1994 well enough, as well as the transition from the old South Africa to the new South Africa and how their respective faith communities played a role in helping them through this transition.
• The participants are all white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans.
• The participants are all well informed of the main theological themes of missional theology.
• All participants have had at least five years work experience in the DRC.
• All participants have worked or are still working in a suburban multi-racial context, within a mainly white Afrikaans DRC faith community.

Table 3.1: Summary of participants’ age, sex and race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>City</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Centurion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Pretoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Cape Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Stellenbosch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Stellenbosch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Stellenbosch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Wellington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H*</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Cape Town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Bellville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Randburg</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Only participant that works in a multi cultural DRC community
3.6 Semi-structured conversational interviews

The interviews took place in familiar surroundings for each of these ministers. Locations for the interviews included coffee shops, church offices or private homes. The interviews were done in a relaxed, informal manner, even though a number of formal questions were asked. All of the interviews were recorded and where possible, additional notes were made on certain observations. The interviews were transcribed and a summary is included as Addendum 1 to this study. Each interview was thoroughly read. Data clustering was done in order to identify recurring themes and narratives.

By using a qualitative research approach (as described in Chapter 1), I was able to identify recurring narratives or themes relating to cross-cultural diversity. Conclusions are based on my observations and interpretations of these narratives. None of the participants had any prior knowledge about the field or the content of my research. Although the consent form that they signed explains what my study is about, this form was only signed after the interview was completed to ensure that the participants were not led to the narratives I hoped to identify.

I wanted the interview to take the form of an informal conversation that happens on a daily basis between ministers of the DRC. In various conversations I have had, apart from the interviews, the ministers theologically reflected on various missional, liturgical, pastoral and ecclesial dynamics playing out in their respective communities or synods. By asking questions that reflected the style and nature of these conversations, I wanted to see if there are issues of race, culture, language and diversity underlying the ecclesial experiences of these ministers. In some of the interviews I had to nudge and press the conversation to go a bit deeper into these narratives, yet in all of the interviews the conversation developed quickly into a conversation about whiteness in the DRC within a multi-racial South African society.
3.7 Two main questions

All of the interviews started with the question: “Tell me more about who you are”. The aim was to see if race, sex, culture and language were on the minds of the participants. Any cultural reference to themselves was adequate for me to draw the conclusion that they see themselves as part of a particular group. It was notable that only two of the participants referred vaguely to themselves in definitions associated with Afrikaner culture; for example, “boerseun” or “proud Afrikaner”.

The second question was about the community and the context in which the participants live and work. It was surprising to note with this question that themes of race, culture and language were much more on the forefront than when the participants were reflecting about themselves.

Seeing that the interviews were face-to-face conversations, the participants might have deemed it unnecessary to state obvious facts such as “I am a white Afrikaans male.” The same could be said of them reflecting on their DRC communities. Why was it necessary to talk about race, culture or faith communities when the person interviewing them was also from the same broader community? My reflection on this observation is the following: it is easier to be aware of racial themes when one is the observer, but one’s own race, language and culture can often be hidden in the blind spot.

These two question were then followed by a series of questions and comments in response to the participant’s reflections on his or her experience in ministry. My role as interviewer was to follow the conversation in a curious way while being led by the participant in our exploration of the themes relevant to this study. I ended all the interviews with the same question: “Do you feel at home in South Africa?”. In Chapter 4 I will explore identity themes regarding whiteness in a post-apartheid South Africa. I will be in conversation with voices such as Antjie Krog, Melissa Steyn and Cobus van Wyngaard. There is a perception that white Afrikaans South Africans are experiencing a
sense of loss, finding themselves in an identity crisis. The last question tries to measure the temperature of this perception among the participants.

3.8 Interlocutors

The interviews should be seen as a collective whole, forming one big conversation. The metaphor for this collective conversation is a conference of small group conversations with facilitated feedback to the big group. The theme of the conference is “Diversity in the DRC”. The purpose of this practice is to present all the smaller discussions as one big conversation representing the voice of the conference as a unit with recurring themes. At this conference I play the role of facilitator, reflecting on each theme, asking open-ended questions that might guide the conference to deeper discussions and further reflections. At this conference, there are “keynote” speakers present, who are invited to reflect on the feedback from the small group discussions.

The various interlocutors in this discussion of diversity in the DRC are:

- 10 ministers from the DRC;
- a newspaper report on the 2014 Highveld Synod;
- Antjie Krog’s *Begging to be Black* (2011);
- Melissa Steyn’s *Whiteness is not what it used to be* (2001); and
- myself as researcher with a missional hermeneutic as framed in Chapter 2.

3.9 Eight stories

I identified eight themes regarding racial diversity in the DRC. In the spirit of creativity and with the aim of proposing a missional practice of listening, I have titled these themes “Eight Stories”. I have titled each story in an “I / our statement”. This is done intentionally, as I include myself and my own experiences as a minister in the DRC as a prominent part of all of the themes. The eight stories are listed here:

1. I feel at home in South Africa.
2. I long for a more colourful congregation.
3. My journey across racial boundaries started with an outreach.
4. My church is too white (still the “bastion of the Afrikaner”).
5. Our money is keeping us lily white.
6. I anticipate conflict when I pursue this longing in my community.
7. It all comes down to leadership.
8. Our churches can be creative in crossing racial boundaries.

3.9.1 Story 1: I feel at home in South Africa
A dominant thread throughout all the conversations is that the participants consider South Africa to be their home, the only place on earth that they “choose to live”. The natural beauty of the country is a prominent identity marker. Participant B framed his “at home-ness” in the job security he enjoys as a white male in South Africa through being a minister in the DRC. He reflected on the fact that he has nothing to complain about, and feels that he lives a privileged life in relation to most South Africans.

One of the participants (Participant B, Addendum 1) expressed his Afrikaner identity in a very positive manner in response to this question, stating that his unique heritage can be a gift to a broader South African society. Others felt strongly that they are African, or at least South African, and not specifically Afrikaner. Some participants stated that they do not see themselves as whites, but as Africans. Participant J confessed that he is still trying to find his place in South Africa and it seems to him that his children are finding their place much easier.

3.9.2 Story 2: I long for a more colourful congregation
A longing for a multi-cultural ecclesiology was a dominant theme in all of the conversations. Throughout the interviews, the tension of being in an all-white faith community within a diverse South African context was evident. A shared feeling among all participants was that white Afrikaans churches face a big challenge regarding their relationships across cultural borders. One participant made it clear that if the DRC
wants to play a role in the broader South African society, the church needs to change. He was referring to change regarding cultural diversity and healthier relationships with other faith communities from racially different backgrounds.

Almost all participants expressed, in one way or another, the hope to see more people of different cultures becoming part of their congregation. This hope was framed in positive and negative terms. Some felt excited about the possibilities of being involved in cross-cultural activities, sensing that it will help them and their community to be part of the “real South Africa.” Others expressed their longing for a more multi-cultural community out of frustration with a life detached from the “real South Africa”. This phrase is also commonly used in other conversations regarding the experience of white people’s lives, in relationship to the so-called rest of South Africa. Behind this is a feeling that the excluded, secure, gated life of many wealthy white South Africans is detached from the real life playing out in South African society. “Real” here refers mostly to the living conditions and experiences of the majority of black and coloured people.

Another important factor behind the longing for a more diverse expression of church has to do with recent missional theological developments on ecclesial levels within the DRC. All participants have been influenced by either formal missional studies, or various DRC-related missional initiatives, as well as other programmes. There is a strong sense that God is inviting their communities on a missional journey across different boundaries, including racial boundaries. These shifts in theological language within DRC faith communities are explored in the previous chapter.

Some participants feel disheartened by the slow pace of the journey regarding church unity between the DRC and the URC. One participant (Participant E) commented on recent developments in the Western Cape Synod regarding the Belhar Confession as “mosterd na die maal” (serving the mustard after the meal is finished).
3.9.3 Story 3: My journey across racial boundaries started with an outreach

Central to the participants’ start to their own journey regarding racial diversity, is them taking part in a local church’s outreach to a different community. This was probably the strongest narrative present with participants B, C and F. They all remember a time of racial separation in South Africa and can share stories of how “naive” and “uninformed” they once lived. When asked what changed them to a life that is more inclusive to the stories of others, they all responded with stories of outreaches. Some of the younger participants (Participant A in particular) also mentioned the diversity in their schools since 1994, as well as the time they spent at university, as contributors to becoming a more inclusive and integrated person.

3.9.4 Story 4: My church is too white (still the “bastion of the Afrikaner”)

When the participants reflected on their communities, they framed the cultural identity of their community in a negative way. Although most participants felt at ease with their white Afrikaans identity, to the extent that they were able to express some form of pride about being an Afrikaner, they could not translate the same sense of peace and pride when they reflected on being an “Afrikaner only” church in a multi-racial South African society. It seems that, for these participants, being white is less problematic than being white-only.

Most of the participants felt that the DRC is still the “bastion of the Afrikaner” to some extent. Some shared recent stories of how this is still evident in the daily life of their community. Participant C referred to a church council meeting where one of the council members expressed it in these exact terms, that their church should be there for the “behoud van Afrikaans” (preservation of Afrikaans). He shared his frustrations that, after 20 years in a democratic South Africa, the DRC has not been able to shed the “volkskerk” identity inherited from the Apartheid years. Participant B commented that the “N.G.” abbreviation to his community’s name carries negative baggage (N.G. is an abbreviation for Dutch Reformed in Afrikaans).
Most DRC communities will have this abbreviation as part of their church’s name. The name usually refers to the suburb or town of that community. I have personally encountered a number of DRC ministers and their communities, on different occasions, who have expressed similar opinions regarding the baggage of Apartheid carried in the name of the church. The whiteness of the DRC embodies an old world that rarely exists elsewhere in the country.

Some participants reflected on the DRC as a workplace and how “other worldly” it must seem for community members who work in very diverse, multi-cultural contexts. Participant B and F commented that they have job security in the DRC as a result of the homogeneous white culture of the church.

Participant J, who recently moved from an urban context to a rural context, discovered that the worries of people in his new environment are similar to those of people in an urban context. These worries relate to a search for identity in South Africa; he perceives that Afrikaners find themselves in an identity vacuum. In most cases, the cultural identity of the community is not explicitly framed for the preservation of Afrikaans or the Afrikaner, yet they still sense an expectation from the members of the community that the church plays a role in preserving their cultural heritage.

It is also interesting to note that some participants felt that Afrikaner culture, even among conservative Afrikaners, partly includes underlying values of respect, hospitality and risk taking. Participant B framed it by saying that, although his community has a long and old conservative Afrikaner background, there is a growing culture within the church to cross boundaries and to take risks. The importance of this receptiveness to change is highlighted by a common feeling among the participants that the DRC will need to change, otherwise it will not be a relevant voice in broader South African society. Participant I expressed his opinion clearly by saying: “If the DRC wants to make
a real difference in this country, we will have to change”. Participant C commented that the church will be poor, unless we become more racially integrated.

3.9.5 Story 5: Our money is keeping us lily white
A common feeling among the participants is the fact that the communities where participants work are financially more secure than communities from other cultural backgrounds. This is a big stumbling block on the path towards church unity between the DRC and the URC, as well as partnerships between local DRC communities and other communities from different cultural backgrounds.

If taken as a true account of the DRC in general, it can however be a gross generalisation, because other DRC communities are struggling financially. The perception for the majority of the participants is that cultural diversity within the DRC can be stifled by their community’s resourcefulness. Some of the examples that were given related to the contrast between the salaries of DRC ministers and the salaries of neighbouring URC ministers. Salary differences can create inner conflicts between ministers. Participant I was very outspoken about this. Participants feel that the church has to change, but they also sense that the security of being privileged is keeping the church from changing.

3.9.6 Story 6: I anticipate conflict when I pursue this longing in my community
Some participants experience elements of resistance within their communities when themes of racial diversity surface. A few have confessed to have stopped preaching or speaking about this altogether. One participant said that, owing to his anticipation of conflict, he avoids preaching about racial diversity and rather focuses on personal relationships within the community as a way of transforming the community towards being more open to change.
It is noteworthy that none of the participants could recall incidents of intense conflict that needed mediation. One story in particular also resonated with a similar experience that I have had in the community where I serve as minister. The church had to stop a certain charity project, because the office personnel felt unsafe in the presence of poor black people. The short story at the beginning of this chapter is an adaptation of this account.

At times the participants experience a growing resistance from community members regarding diversity. This resistance is experienced especially where diversity challenges community members’ cultural beliefs and practices that are held dear, or where diversity is associated with dangerous elements.

As noted by most of the participants, it is very complex to have racial diversity on the church’s agenda. One participant shared his frustration with himself: he finds that he has sacrificed his straightforwardness since becoming a minister in a very Afrikaans church environment, where his community battles to keep the church members happy in the shadow of a successful Afrikaans church down the road from them. He realised that preaching about racism and racial diversity irritates, and sometimes even angers, the members of his church. “They do not want to hear politics in church”. Where he was outspoken about these issues in the past, he has now, in the light of constant negative feedback in his community, eased up on the frequency of speaking about these important issues.

3.9.7 Story 7: It all comes down to leadership
The majority of the participants were able to share hopeful stories of how someone in their life played a mentoring role that helped them on this journey. In some cases this mentor was a fellow minister in the DRC or a lecturer at university. Others have found mentors in the form of friends: usually a friend from a different background, culture, race or sex. These friendships have influenced them on a personal level, helping them to deal with their inherited prejudice towards another person. I noted that, although they
anticipate conflict in their communities whenever racial diversity is promoted, their respective leadership teams and church councils are positive about this journey. Some have even set out various goals and strategies to grow in terms of racial diversity. Participant I stressed the importance of leadership in cultivating healthy diversity in the church.

In almost all of the cases a senior member of the DRC was involved in coordinating an outreach. A prominent theme of embodied leadership is common among the participants’ memories regarding those outreaches. In other words, pastors can play an important role in facilitating boundary-crossing experiences that may lead to a person’s second or third conversion, namely the conversion towards the other. The embodied behaviour by the leaders that the participants were highlighting had to do with friendship relationships that were evident between the various leaders of the different social and cultural groups. They were able to embody a certain kind of “boundary crossing” because they had deeply formed relationships with the individuals within the community on the other side of the boundary.

3.9.8 Story 8: Our churches can be creative in crossing racial boundaries

The interviews suggest that not all churches’ journey regarding diversity will look the same. Although only one participant’s community had a racially diverse identity, the others were also sharing “little” stories of different embodiments of hospitality and inclusivity in their community. Some communities were in well-developed, formal relationships with other churches or organisations from other cultural backgrounds.

Participant A shared how his community was slowly incorporating the traditional Sunday Sotho service into the broader imagination of their church. They made a language shift in how they would talk about the place of the service in relationship to the rest of the Sunday services. Previously this service was seen as an outreach ministry of the church to domestic workers of the members of the church; now they have changed the identity
to one of the church’s Sunday services. This shift in thinking is very important within the ecclesiology of the DRC because of the role that the liturgy and preaching plays in the ecclesial imagination of the community. Participant I travels extensively between different DRC communities. He was able reflect on diverse expressions of cross-cultural initiatives in both urban and rural communities.

3.10 Conclusion

The participants, 10 ministers in the DRC, who have been influenced by missional theology’s boundary-crossing identity, reflected on their own homogeneous white community in a critical way. They feel that hiding in the perceived safety of whiteness will make their churches increasingly irrelevant in the broader South African context. Their discontent with homogeneous whiteness is balanced by a new appreciation for who they are as Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans.

Their challenge, however, is to integrate their identities into the larger diverse narratives in South African society. This echoes Antjie Krog’s (2011) search for an ethical way of being white in a majority black society. In the following chapter I will explore various narratives of whiteness playing out in the current South African society as identified by Melissa Steyn (2001). One of these stories tells the journey by some whites trying to become white Africans. This narrative was evident in most of the interviews, with participants labelling themselves as not just white, but also African.

These participants have been engaging their communities about becoming more racially diverse. This engagement has been met with positive and negative reactions from their communities. Some participants have responded to the negative reactions by turning down the volume of their missional intensity. Others have been encouraged by their colleagues and church councils to pursue this journey regardless of the criticism. The ways in which racial diversity have been explored, differed from community to community, and range from liturgical experiments with other communities, interracial
workshops, community development initiatives, outreaches, and partnerships between different communities, to informal meetings or friendships with ministers and pastors from black faith communities.

Some of the participants have a racial sensitivity and cultural awareness, which have been deeply influenced by their first experiences as young people going on an outreach to a different community. This exposure to other cultures, under the guidance of a mentor, have nudged them on a journey towards becoming more racially integrated. These adventures have given them a new language to rethink their white way of life in relation to the other. In the following chapter I will argue that outreaches should be seen as linguistic pilgrimages that take the community on a liminal journey towards finding a new vocabulary in a changing society.
Chapter 4
Colouring a white church in various shades of brown: A missional invitation towards hybrid identities

Chapter Outline
4.1 A short story
4.2 Introduction
4.3 Content outline
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4.5 "Whiteness just isn’t what it used to be"
4.6 White morality
4.7 White Christian colonies
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4.10 Painting white faces black
4.11 Colouring the DRC in various shades of brown
4.12 “Bruinbrode” and “Boerbrode” - the practice of eating together
4.13 Conclusion

4.1 A Short Story
Nightmare on Kerkplein
I woke up with memories from a nightmare. In my dream, I am standing in front of 40 000 fellow South Africans. We are gathered at Kerkplein in Pretoria for a local music festival. The crowds are singing and dancing to old familiar songs that I remember from camping weekends during the 1980s when I was part of the “Landsdiens”. “Suikerbossie ek wil jou hê” gets a local African sound with the crowd. A lot more beat than I am used to. I see black, coloured, Indian, Asian, white, Afrikaans and English, all together. The music moves quickly from one song to another; a medley of childhood choir memories flashes past. I am proud and ashamed at the same time.
I notice a change in mood. The crowd seems to be changing. I see less and less colour. Only white people remain. In the back of the crowd I see the poet and writer Antjie Krog, begging with her black friends to stay, but they are all leaving. Some other whites are leaving too. I hear Elsabé Zietsman declare: "raait, ek is nou klaar."

It is only then that I notice local Afrikaans singer-songwriter Steve Hofmeyr on the stage. He is wearing a “toga en ’n wit das”. His pants are the colours of the old South African flag. The first note from his guitar sends a chill through my spine, yet I get goosebumps all over. My posture becomes military-like. Involuntary, my right hand moves to my heart, holding my chest as if I am about to sing the national anthem. My mouth opens and the words “uit die blou van onse hemel” roll from my tongue and over my lips, and fall like dying, bleeding doves on the floor. I feel anger pushing up within me. Somewhere gunshots go off in quick succession and someone in the crowd remarks that another “boer is murdered”. Steve’s voice leads the crowd through the song until the “kranse antwoord gee… ons vir jou, ons vir jou, ons vir jou Orania.”

I see Antjie crying in the back. I try to pull my hand away from my heart, but I am stuck in this patriotic posture. The crowd becomes angrier and more aggressive. The louder the music becomes, the less clothes I have on. When the last note is played, I am standing completely naked in front of thousands of people. They look shocked. I look down and notice that my whole body is becoming black from my feet upwards. Only my face is left white. “Baster! Baster! Baster!” the crowd shouts. Steve hands me his religious robe. I cover my body with this traditional toga worn by the ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church. As I walk off the stage, the garment soaks up the blackness from my skin and I am again white all over. When the music fades and the crowd goes home, the body of a young woman lies dead on the floor. The gunshots we heard earlier came from the barrel of her boyfriend's gun.
No farmer died that day.

The last thought before I woke from the dream was Rachel Schneider’s reflection on Antjie Krog’s book *Begging to be Black* (2009): “Despite her begging, whiteness remains” (Schneider, 2013).

4.2 Introduction

Missiology discerns the dance between culture and gospel. Hendriks defines theology as discernment in a specific time and place. In Chapter 2, I reflected on theological shifts in missiology over the last 60 years. The rediscovering of Christ’s incarnation as central missional theme played an important role in shaping a missional imaginary that takes context and culture seriously.

Outside of theology, Antjie Krog (2009:3524) reflects on her journey as a white South African finding meaning and identity in a majority black post-apartheid South Africa. She makes an important link between Christian culture and traditional African culture. She argues that “Christianity is not simply linked to, or an add-on to, a kind of African interconnectedness, but it is in fact imbedded therein… these concepts moved across cultural borders and were infused and energized by a world of interconnectedness-towards-wholeness to assist people to break out of their past and make a new future possible.”

I find this understanding of the relationship between culture and gospel beautiful. Missional theology practises the art of discerning the triune God at work in the world, thus also leading to an awareness of God’s presence in a specific culture. Since the 1970s, this practice has been labelled as contextualisation. Bosch critically reflects on the evolvement in missional theology around this theme and ultimately concludes “that all theology (or sociology, political theory, etc) is, by its very nature, contextual” (2011:415).
In the previous chapter I was in conversation with 10 ministers of the DRC, against the backdrop of a vibrant new missional imaginary. Together we reflected on the culturally homogeneous contexts of our churches. We shared stories of how, through the language of the *missio Dei*, our communities grapple with calling and identity in a post-apartheid South Africa. We feel torn between the movements of the gospel and the movements of our culture. We are the mediators of the domestic fights between the family members of our new language homes.

Since 1994 our communities have been living in new language homes. Some have tried, for as long as possible, to stay in their old homes, although many have long since been evicted. Others have intentionally built new homes in old building styles. More and more communities, however, are moving into new language neighbourhoods. In Chapter 2, I introduced a growing missional language in the DRC that more and more ministers, communities and synods have embraced as a key hermeneutic for reading text and context.

Through this interpretive lens, themes, narratives and values such as diversity, inclusivity, hospitality, humility, justice and community development have been inviting the DRC on a new missional journey. Since 1994, DRC communities have slowly but surely been moving from a pre-1994 insider/outsider mentality to a more open, hospitable and inclusive community. It is what Hirsch and Hirsch (2010:152-153) identify as the movement from a “bounded set” to a “centred set”. On formal institutional level, the DRC has been integrated by various ecumenical bodies back into the various Christian families of churches. These developments should be celebrated.

Since 1994, themes of diversity have been more and more on the forefront in the DRC. In the previous chapter I highlighted a newspaper report on the Highveld Synod’s (2014) “decision to grab a hold of diversity”. This also needs to be celebrated. When I reflect on
diversity in the broadest sense, the DRC has improved by leaps and bounds on various diversity fronts:

- More and more faith communities have been experimenting with liturgical expressions that validate the diverse spiritual needs within congregations. These expressions have cultivated an awareness towards the other, and reminded the members of the community that although not everyone is the same, we can still function as one body.

- Although it remains a male-dominated organisation, the DRC has come a long way from a church where women were not allowed in leadership, to a community that is employing women as ministers, often in team leadership positions.

- Although the DRC is still far from making a bold step towards embracing gay and lesbian Christians’ lifestyle completely, it has come a long way since the church of the 80s and 90s. In recent years, there have been cases of babies of gay and lesbian couples being baptised and in some faith communities gay and lesbian wedding ceremonies have been celebrated.

In the previous chapter I reported on eight storylines playing out in the lives of 10 ministers from the DRC. Central to these narratives is the search for identity in a post-apartheid South Africa. The identity question arose in various forms: from embracing their place in South Africa to feeling a sense of pride about being Afrikaner; and from feeling discontent with being in a homogeneous white faith community to a hopeful longing to experience a more richly layered cultural community.

In this chapter I will turn the magnifying glass on white identity in a changing South Africa. My focus will be on racial diversity within the DRC and whether a previously whites-only faith community can now be a place that cultivates a healthy awareness regarding racial diversity, breaks down deeply formed historical stereotypes and leads people towards a missional spirituality in which people are able to embrace a diverse
range of identity markers (hybridity) and become more grounded (incarnated) human beings.

Also core to this research is my own personal journey towards identity in a post-apartheid South Africa. Jean Vanier (1989:65-68) writes that to become human implies two realities: “It means to be someone, to have cultivated our gifts, and also to be open to others, to look at them not with a feeling of superiority but with eyes of respect. It means to become men and women with the wisdom of love. For this, we often need help.” To frame it differently, it is a process of becoming fully present in a specific time and place, of being at home not only in my own pale skin, but at peace in the country of colourful skins. Vanier says we need help with this journey and that religion “can be a gentle source of strength and love, as can a mentor or wise friend.” The main question I ask is how can my Christian religion and, more specifically, the Dutch Reformed denomination, be a gentle source of strength and love for more whites like myself.

I need a theological framework to reflect on my white identity. In Chapter 2 I laid down a broad missional imaginary that invites me to adopt (embody) an incarnational posture, which is shaped by a theology rooted in the diversity of the Trinity. This framework leads me to a more nuanced and contextual reflection regarding my own carne. My flesh has a history in this country that I need to deal with and missional theology, although tainted with this bloody white flesh, might be a guide towards embracing the flesh of others in the name of the One who became Flesh.

4.3 Content outline
1. The master narrative of whiteness has come to an end, yet it is constantly reconstructed in the lives of ordinary white South Africans in various forms and shapes.
2. Whiteness is a language house that centres itself as the dominant imagination.
3. Some African cultures have experienced whiteness as loud, rude and domineering.
4. In South Africa, western Christianity has played a role in forming this domineering white narrative, for instance by dividing the world in categories of good and evil, white and black.
5. For whites to play a role in post-colonial South Africa, we need to become postcolonial.
6. A successful South African society needs an ethos that celebrates diversity.
7. An exciting journey of becoming awaits the DRC by opening up to hybrid identities.

4.4 Chapter outcomes

In this chapter I will deepen my conclusions in Chapter 3 regarding DRC ministers’ discontent with their white homogeneous communities in the context of a diverse South African society. Our whiteness is on the table, open for critical reflection.

I will argue that, if the DRC is serious about diversity, we need to critically reflect on the baggage we carry as a homogeneous white church in a post-apartheid South Africa. I will point out that this identity is often experienced by black people as rude and domineering. This is significant, because the DRC is slowly learning a new missional language that invites the DRC to adopt a posture of humility. I will also highlight the comparison between the eight stories told in Chapter 3 with the narratives of whiteness identified by Melissa Steyn (2001). I will argue that the invitation for white churches is not to become black, but rather to become hybrid. In so doing, they will be able to celebrate, and integrate into, a more colourful way of being human.

4.5 “Whiteness just isn’t what it used to be”

I am an umlungu. I hear this word on the streets of Johannesburg where I am involved in inner city youth development. It is a common African word to describe a white person.
I hear it on the sandy streets of Manjakaze, a town in Mozambique that members of my church visit yearly as part of a community outreach programme. I even hear it in very modern parts of the city where I live and work. A small child once said it out loud from his perch on his father’s shoulders when I walked past them on a busy street in an uptown part of Johannesburg. I am a white man. It is not all that I am, but it is a big part of who I am in a post-apartheid South Africa.

Antjie Krog, in her work on identity in a post-apartheid South Africa, reflects on the baggage she carries due to a history of whiteness. The Sesotho word used for a white person is *lekgoa*. Krog explains that the prefix “le” is a class 7 noun used for people of “debased status”, while the word “khoa” as a noun refers to a species of lice that grows on the hindquarters of domestic animals. If the word is used as a verb, Krog says that it could mean “to fight”; “to shout”; “or to lack decorum, to be rude, cause embarrassment, to be disrespectful, have no regard for other people.” Krog explains further that whatever interpretation one chooses, the word *lekgoa* refers to a “class of people who lack respect for other human beings.” When a white person acts contrary to these behaviours, the Basotho people will say that he or she is not white, but rather a human being. According to Krog, this word does not identify white people as a contrasting group, or “the other”, but indicates a group that itself regards the rest of humanity as “the other”.

Melissa Steyn (2001:3-21) labels this the “master narrative of whiteness.” She explains that whiteness was a “modernist construction, central to the colonisation project.” It was achieved through the “exorcism of everything “black”, particularly African, from white identity”. In this White House of Language the concept of whiteness is “absolutely centred, unitary, masculine.” It is what Owens (1992:175) calls “Western man’s self-appointed mission of transforming the entire planet in his own image.”
De Vos (2013) remembers a visit to Thailand where every “single model in advertisements on billboards and on television… was more “European” looking than the average person in the street.” De Vos (2013) remarks on this that “in most societies that have been economically, culturally and socially colonised by the West that white “Europeans” are the norm against which all others are implicitly measured.”

Through the well oiled machine of colonialism and in later years the National Party’s apartheid policy, this master narrative of whiteness was “inflicted in the course of South African history” (Steyn, 2001:151). When apartheid fell, so did the master narrative. The amount of energy it took to enforce such a narrative through a minority group is overwhelming. Steyn refers to the “systemic oppression and violence” that was needed to keep the “baasskap” narrative alive and in place. After 1994, white South Africans in particular needed to “renegotiate their identities”.

Reflecting on myself as a white Afrikaans-speaking Christian, I cannot escape the negative link between power, privilege, missions and white identity in an African context, resulting in others experiencing whiteness as rude and disrespectful. As a missional theologian, I need to be critical of how the “baasskap” language is interwoven with the missional tradition I come from. My missional imagination has been shaped by my white Afrikaans history and, although I have been invited into a different missional language home through prophetic voices such as David Bosch, Leslie Newbigin, Alan Roxburgh, Reggie Nel and Nelus Niemandt, the “baaskkap” narrative still remains like herpes in my blood. I am reminded by Jonathan Jansen that there is a knowledge in my blood, a default setting that continues to take me into an older narrative: one of control, power and dominance.

In Chapter 2 I advocated for an incarnational posture based on humility and an openness to the other. The more I reflect on the master narrative of whiteness, the more I understand how counter-white this missional imaginary is. It invites me to leave the
home of my modernist fathers behind for a new, vibrant, diverse world where I can become human again. Steyn makes a hopeful remark that the energy spent in the past to keep a master narrative alive can now be expended in creative energy, choosing more varied options of personal and social redefinition.

This research is interested in this snippet of hope identified by Steyn. To echo Krog’s reflection on the Sotho language metaphor for whiteness, I am interested to know how my journey in the DRC helps me grow away from the *lekgoa* narrative (which the DRC for the most part of its history had been actively cultivating) to a posture that labels me as human, instead of “lice”. Key to this journey, as I showed in Chapter 2, is a trinitarian missional hermeneutic.

The good news of Chapter 3 is that all the DRC ministers whom I have interviewed are uncomfortable with DRC communities shaped around the idea of being havens for whiteness. The following paragraphs will explore the link between whiteness and Christianity in South Africa.

### 4.6 White morality

Looking back on whiteness in the Afrikaner’s history, we see a close link between Christianity and the master narrative of whiteness. A very specific form of racialized Calvinistic Christianity took its form among Afrikaners, which later developed into a tribal identity of Afrikaner Christian nationalism. Steyn (2001:32) refers to Fredricksen (1981) for further reflection and reading.

Steyn also points out that Christianity formed an underlying textual field within which these stories were embedded. The grammatical and rhetorical practices of Christianity within the dualistic framework of good vs evil / God vs the Devil / reason vs passion / white vs black gave an “innate moral authority to white people”. This “Manichean allegory” became a framework for early Christianity in Africa to develop a process of
“identifying the (white -sic) self with a chain of signifiers that are deemed desirable, while identifying those one subjugates with the oppositional chain one rejects, the mechanism of othering” (Steyn, 2001:14).

In Chapter 2 I explored theological themes of “embracing the other” within the Trinity that I believe can counter this legacy of whiteness within reformed Christianity in South Africa. Countering this narrative is crucial for the predominantly white DRC, because this form of whiteness is inherently unstable and highly conflicted within itself (Memmi, 1990:142)

Ironically, the purer the white identity, the more dependant it is on its black other (Steyn, 2001:16). This paradox runs deep within unhealthy spirituality and other forms of identity. To fixate on exclusivity, something or someone must be excluded. It is to define the world according to what you do not want to be, or fear, or hate. To do this, a lot of negative energy is needed to define oneself over and against the other, and vice versa.

4.7 White Christian colonies

The link between missional movements, modern churches and old colonial paradigms is well documented. Rieger (2004) shows how these old structures have been dancing together, shaping societies towards a modernist colonial identity. It is what Steyn (2001) defines as “converting Africa into a psychological home fit for white man.” The use of verb by Steyn invites this link between missions and colonialism to the conversation: converting Africa for the sake of white identity. Conversion is a big part of the western churches’ missional imagination for African contexts, in most cases relying on the structures already provided by colonialism, and in other cases being the vehicle towards colonial structures.

It is a common practice for short-term mission groups from an urban western context to train themselves in cultural sensitivity when visiting rural African communities. I have
attended a lot of these training sessions. A common thing most groups are taught is the importance of long pants for men and long skirts for women, especially when visiting local leaders, families and church services. I cannot help but to comment on the irony of this. Years since the first missionaries introduced European dress code to African communities, the great grandchildren of those missionaries are now being taught by the same African communities the importance of this dress code as essential to showing respect to African culture.

At one of these mission trips I witnessed the showing of the Jesus film to a particular rural area in the Gaza province of Mozambique. The people attending this evening were mainly Shangaan-speaking people with a vivid memory of colonial life under the Portuguese. The film “starred” a blonde Jesus with long hair that looked as if it was blow waved by one of the disciples while they were on the boat. I wondered about whose gospel was preached that evening. In contrast with the classic Jesus film used by missionaries all over the world, the local South African production Son of Man tells the story of Jesus set in a context more familiar with a rural black audience.

In one way, colonialism was an attempt to convert Africa into a psychological home fit for European whites. In colonialism, missions were done by whites on blacks. Going “to” Africa, or currently “into” the townships, following Jesus to “give back”, “make a difference”, “paint an orphanage” and “change the world”. In most of the outreaches in which I have been involved, the movement was always from white to black. Black has been the recipient of white resources, white theology, white help and white gods.

For a long time, in the lives of South Africans, stories of being and becoming were defined over and against European norms and standards. For whites, other people were non-white, non-European and non-Christian. Steyn writes that an important shift happened in the lives of whites: for the “first time, white South Africans were learning African ways from Africans… Eurocentric knowledge is now thrown into relief.”
Anderson (1990:249) writes that “information acts upon as rain acts upon sand castles. It discredits them, deconstructs them.” Steyn (2001:170) cuts to the core by saying that “the only way for whites to play a role in postcolonial South Africa, is to become themselves postcolonial.”

The white Christian narrative in South Africa has an opportunity to intentionally deconstruct its old colonial and apartheid narratives, towards embodying new missional imaginaries beneficial for a more diverse South African society.

4.8 White loss

Antjie Krog (2011:2102), in her book on white identity in a post-apartheid South Africa, remembers the world of the coloniser as very coherent. Half of her life she functioned entirely in Afrikaans:

“The new South Africa changed that… We all live an incoherency… No part of our history is without its exclusion and destruction of some part of the population. On our national holidays we realise we have nothing in common - not what we read, not what we speak, not what we write, not what we sing, not whom we honour. Nothing binds us.”

She argues that our splintered identity is rooted in a long and painful history marked by violent invasions of the other. Since 1994, “the Afrikaners found their way of life splintered by a gradually self-asserting black majority.” She explains further that the Afrikaners, “who have so easily appropriated the land and the continent, found themselves in a new kind of post-colonial dynamic and are still reeling and deeply resentful about the incoherence of their lives” (Krog, 2009:l2112).

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1 A more condensed and critical reflection of the Afrikaner’s history is needed to broaden the conversation regarding postcolonial dynamics for white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans. Are there parallels in the Afrikaner’s struggle to deal with colonialism post war between 1880 and 1910 with the current conversation? Is there a unique invitation for white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans regarding identity post-apartheid that might differ from white English-speaking South Africans?
Krog’s letters to her mother reveal the underlying discontent and incoherence she feels with her own context. In the perfect order of the first world Germany, the harshness of South African society comes to the forefront. The vulnerability and feeling of being unprotected even to those who are privileged is subtly and ironically revealed through her letters. When her husband came to visit her in Germany, he remarked that “he is going to vote for the political party that is not dancing” because “watching BBC or CNN, it seems the only business in Africa is dancing, dressing and, it has to be said, dying” (Krog 2011:2121). One evening after experiencing a clean German city and non-slip pathways, she remarks: “It’s beyond my understanding, coming from a place where we kill each other for twenty rand.”

Steyn (2001:155), reflecting on this “dramatic change” whites experienced in their “life world”; and reading from W.T. Anderson’s *Reality isn’t what it used to be*, concludes that the collapse of a belief system can be like the end of a world: “People can literally cease to know who they are.”

Referring to this postmodern displacement, Steyn (2001:155-162) identifies various losses felt by whites:

- loss of home;
- loss of autonomy and control;
- loss of a sense of relevance;
- loss of guaranteed legitimacy;
- loss of honour; and
- loss of face.

This is relevant to the DRC’s understanding of dominant dynamics playing out in the lives of its members. This sense of displacement that Steyn (2001) identifies is echoed by Willem Boshoff’s (2011) examination of the impact on the DRC caused by the major
changes (both domestically and internationally) over the past four decades. Boshoff (2011) studied the long-lasting grief that accompanies such a dramatic change and loss. Relevant to this study, Boshoff (2011) argues that practical theology can guide people through this grief.

A common theme among the ministers interviewed for this study is a feeling that, for some of the members in their DRC communities, the church has become a place of cultural belonging against a backdrop of change and displacement. For some the DRC has become “the last bastion of the Afrikaners”. One of the ministers described the DRC as secure workplace for the 50-something white male who in other social spheres experiences various forms of resistance.

Another minister remembered an incident at a planning meeting for the Sunday service. One of the team members was very vocal about the Sunday service as a place where Afrikaans as a language is nurtured and preserved. The interviews also highlighted conflict, tensions, frustrations and resistance from the members whenever the missional language of the community invited them towards racial diversity, especially when sacrifices regarding language needed to be made.

Feedback from the community is that, during the week they have to deal with all sorts of diversity issues and have to make all sorts of concessions to include some from another culture or race. When they come to church, this is the last thing they want to do or hear. The DRC’s missional journey will need to take these strong feelings into account and guide people to deal with the displacement and (perceived) sense of loss.

4.9 Whites only churches in the new South Africa
For clues regarding current white dynamics playing into the imaginary of the DRC, we have to turn once again to Steyn’s (2001:152) work on whiteness in a post-apartheid South Africa. Steyn identifies a range of “petit narratives” among white South Africans.
Each of these narratives is “competing to explain a view of how being white should be construed in the new dispensation.” Steyn (2001:152) draws two important conclusions regarding the sum total of these narratives. The first is that there is not one unified story for whiteness anymore. The second is that all the various sub-narratives of whiteness have to contend with a new reality that does not support any of the “taken for granted assumptions of superiority and entitlement which the master narrative belief system had inculcated” (Steyn, 2001:152).

The conversational interviews with the ministers of the DRC have highlighted the perception that, for a lot of white Afrikaans-speaking South Africans, the DRC has remained one of the few institutions in the country where homogeneous whiteness is appreciated. In the case of the DRC, the ministers feel that it is more than whiteness in general: strong themes of Afrikaner heritage relating to language and tradition are still expected from certain members of the DRC.

One of the ministers recalled a church council meeting where a prominent member of the church expressed it in direct terms, saying that their church should actively strive to preserve the Afrikaner’s language and culture. All of the ministers, however, felt that their community cannot stay homogeneous. Twenty years into the new South Africa, more and more voices from within the church are pressing the church to fully integrate with the broader South African society. This is easier said than done. Steyn’s (2001) five narratives, as described below, can be helpful to understand why some of the cultural dynamics at play in the DRC makes the movement towards racial diversity a painstakingly slow process.

### 4.9.1 Still colonial after all these years
This is the most fundamentalist of all the narratives. “People who tell this story have not altered the plot or characters to bring them inline with the realities of the change in power” (Steyn 2001:153).
4.9.2 This should not happen to whites
People who live in this story believe the new order is out to get them. “Seething with racial envy they experience what is happening as reversal and victimisation” (Steyn, 2001:153).

4.9.3 Don’t think white, its all right
People who live in this narrative are pragmatic about their new position in South African society, while seeing being white as an integral part of their identity. This narrative consists of two versions: “Whites are doing it for themselves” which tends to retreat to cultural roots, and “We can work it out”, which looks for practical ways to maintain a white influence (Steyn, 2001:153).

4.9.4 A whiter shade of white
This story is predominantly told by left-wing liberals who believe they have never been implicated. They reacted to the highly racialized society by “protesting personal innocence. “I have never been like other whites, I don’t see colour”.” Steyn (2001:101) sees this narrative as a form of evasion, arguing that there are “self-serving reasons why it should suit whites in SA to be colour blind now that the politics of the country have changed” (Steyn, 2001:153).

Many whites have embraced the rainbow dream in such a way that they do not have to deal with a history of white superiority. “We are all the same and should be treated as such.” Steyn (2001:101) notes that denial is the overriding factor. Post-apartheid South Africa is ideologically framed by the “rainbow nation” metaphor introduced by Desmond Tutu and cultivated by the leadership of the late president Nelson Mandela. Reconciliation was a dominant theme in the first half of the new democratic era.
Being colour blind was a value attributed to people who have worked through their inherited racism. Older generations make observations about the born free generation that they do not see colour. They treat everyone as the same. The governing political party in South Africa, the ANC, has at its core the vision of a nonracial, nonsexist democratic society. Though this was an important narrative for a country divided by a racist past, it seems more and more an elusive dream that can also be an easy escape for a lot of people that have not yet dealt with the injustice of apartheid and the privilege gained through being a certain colour.

In some cases this might be a genuine attempt to counter this racist history. Growing up in a society defined by race, it can seem logical that the alternative is to not speak, think, reflect on and act based on race. This might be a knee-jerk reaction to the historically dominant paradigm of white superiority. Unlike “those whites”, some people aim to be colour blind. The hope is that a society will function better if we ignore the differences of race and culture. Steyn (2001:101) reflects on this as “not surprising… given the uncomfortable feelings that may accompany being white.” Steyn (2001) is adamant that this thinking leads to evading the issues of privilege and power.

It seems that the more truthful and helpful way forward for whites is not to discard their own or another's colour, but rather to live with an appreciation and a love for all the God-created colours. It is also important to have a critical awareness that one colour carries in itself the dominant imagination for authority, power, wealth, success, safety and intelligence, while the other colour(s) tend to carry in themselves themes of submission, poverty, failure, unemployment, danger and violence.

In the light of Vanier’s reflection on the role of religion on the journey of becoming, I am interested to explore how my faith can help me cultivate different postures to confess and embrace my dominant colours, as well as appreciate and integrate the colourfulness of others. In this research I argue that the missional imagination that is
currently developing in the DRC, invites the church towards embracing the fifth narrative identified by Steyn (2001:115-147) and described below.

4.9.5 Under African skies
Steyn (2001:115) divides the fifth narrative into three sub-narratives. The first version testifies to the difficulty experienced by whites who are convinced what is happening is right. They support the “Africanizing” of the country, but they do not know how to negotiate their own place in the changes. The second version is an attempt to evade the pain of confronting their whiteness, by appropriating blackness. Central to this tale is white guilt. Steyn (2001:154) concludes that this group of people “cope with their guilt in different ways, either through manipulating their identities, taking on a pastiche of blackness or through living a life of penance.”

The final version of this narrative is what Steyn (2001:141) calls “Hybridization, it’s the Name of the Game.” People who live in this language home are inclined to call themselves (White) Africans. These people do not deny their racialization, but do see their race as problematic. They have, by holding onto both ends of the binaries, integrated blackness into whiteness, Africanness into Europeanness. This narrative undoes the dynamics that originally constructed the master narrative. Steyn (2001:154) argues that this narrative invites whiteness into a more sustained identity in the development of a post-modern Africanized South African society. The significance that this narrative holds for “dismantling whiteness and creating heterogeneous identities is paramount” (Steyn, 2001:168).

4.10 Painting white faces black
At the time of writing this thesis, two separate incidents of “blackface” occurred. The term “blackface” refers to when a white person paints his or her face and or body to depict a black person. S’thembile Cele (2014) responded to these incidents with an honest, heartfelt article published 28 September 2014 in the Afrikaans newspaper
She reports that a majority of black people respond with disgust to such incidents; “although they will not necessarily be able to voice the reasons for their disgust.” “Blackface” is not new. Through modern history, black people have been depicted by white people in negative terms. I refer again to Steyn’s (2001:150) conclusions from the “Manichean allegory”, where black became synonymous with evil, ugly, scary and cruel.

Cele (2014) writes that being black means to be aware of one’s own skin, “to realize that your skin can be seen a costume to entertain, thus having little worth and value.” A black skin has a history, writes Cele (2014). A history of poverty, a history of crime, a history of slavery, a history of violence, a savage history of primitiveness, a history of barbarism, a history of being dirty and in need of being saved. Having a white skin on the other hand means that the world will give you the benefit of the doubt.

Cele (2014) pleads in her article for an honest conversation on race. The reason for the lack of this conversation is because talking about race is uncomfortable. In South Africa, to talk about race is also to talk about white privilege, which is a topic whites will rather ignore, writes Cele (2014). In her article she notes that a black skin has baggage. There is irony in this comment, as underlying this research is my own experience that a white skin in South Africa has baggage with which I need to deal. Racialization in South Africa’s diverse and complex society confronts the cargo we carry in our various pigmentations. Cele (2014) ends her article with a request that echoes my reference to language houses in Chapter 2. She says that we need to “change our vocabulary” in order to think and speak differently about this “complex situation with its long history.”

4.11 Colouring the DRC in various shades of brown

Steyn’s (2001) work on whiteness invites whites on a journey towards hybridization. Krog (2009:13524) calls this a journey in becoming interconnected. She writes that “interconnectedness forms the interpretive foundation of southern African Christianity,
and it is this foundation that enabled people to reinterpret tired and troubled Western concepts such as forgiveness, reconciliation, amnesty and justice in new and usable ways."

In Chapter 3 I shared how a number of DRC ministers long for a more culturally diverse faith community. They expressed feelings of discontent and frustration with their homogeneous white communities. Some are anxious that if their communities do not change over the next few years, they will become irrelevant. In Chapter 2, I outlined how a growing missional imaginary is developing in the broader DRC. Being deeply influenced by a trinitarian and incarnational theology, this social imaginary is layered with themes of interconnectedness.

In the praxis of a faith community, this interconnectedness can take various forms. I am reminded of how one of the respondents talked about their partnership with a black church from a neighbouring community. Their relationship has moved beyond the white church reaching out to the black church. Instead, a first person plural language developed regarding the shared issue of drugs among youth that their communities face. "Together we tackle the challenges of “our” community."

Nico Koopman (2014) speaks of a “liturgy of togetherness across boundaries." In Chapter 2 I refer to a “missional liturgy” that captures the life rhythms of the whole community, much wider than what happens on a Sunday for an hour or two. This partnership between these two churches, tackling the drug problem of “their” broader community “together” is missional liturgy that reflects this interconnectedness. The members of this particular DRC - historically very conservative - are slowly embracing new identity markers for their community. These new markers have the ability to change what constitutes their community’s problems, as well as who qualifies as their neighbours on equal footing.
Steyn (2001:169) argues that a successful South African society will be versatile in embracing both black and white identity markers. “To facilitate this, an ethos that celebrates syncretism is needed; an ethos that is not fixed in a homogeneous category, or according to one axis; but commends the multiple, blurred boundary, rather than the ideological predetermined.” White South Africans need to develop an open heart toward Africa, otherwise deracialization cannot take place. We need an “ethos that applaud(s) the many shades of brown that constitute the human race” (Steyn 2001:169).

4.12 “Bruinbrode” and “Boerbrode” - the practice of eating together

Ndebele (2000), speaking at the Steve Biko Memorial, reminds his audience of a time when whites stockpiled canned foods in response to a changing South African society. Those piles of unopened canned food gathering dust in pantries of white kitchens all around the country serve as a reminder of how wrong the master narrative of whiteness was about a South African future in the hands of the “black” other.

This master narrative of homogeneous whiteness post-1994 is like canned food that has been opened. In a short while it will spoil, contaminated by the metal that once preserved it so well. It needs to be mixed with fresh ingredients and taken through a new process or preparation in order to be tasteful and nutritious.

Krog’s reflection on becoming black takes place mostly in the German context from where she reflects on her identity of being a white South African. A lot of Krog’s self-reflection happens away from the South African context, against the backdrop of her time in Germany. During these reflections, she remembers a classic sourdough bread recipe, well known in older Afrikaans kitchens around South Africa. Krog (2011:819) remembers her mom announcing one day that her “plant is dead”, meaning that the mature sourdough culture that she uses to enliven the dough, has gone bad. Krog inherited this traditional baking method from her mother. She used to make a batch of sourdough and bake two big “boerbrode”. One was to be eaten by her family
while it was still piping hot, while the other was left to cool, broken in big pieces, dried in the oven to be served as “boerbeskuit” with coffee or sweet tea. Krog (2011:819) in detail explains the baking process and even gives a recipe. I find the remembering of a recipe crucial to understanding the journey of becoming human in South Africa. The role food plays in the lives of ordinary South Africans is key to finding creative ways of growing closer to each other. The tradition of this form of bread baking is a tradition shared across the racial boundaries in the Western and Eastern Cape, among Whites, Coloureds and Xhosas.

Krog (2011:819) reflects on the “importance of this family recipe”; a recipe and a live sourdough culture that dated back to the Anglo-Boer war. This short sentence is loaded with identity markers. Something that is passed on from generation to generation. A memory of a time of struggle. A memory of a taste. A memory of steaming hot “boeretroos”. A memory of a mother. A memory of a moment. This is the power of sharing recipes and eating together. It connects us with old stories that played out, not only on the soil of Africa, but also Europe, India, China and America. In the next chapter I will explore this eating together as way forward for communities that want to become more racially diverse.

4.13 Conclusion
Why does the DRC have to critically reflect on whiteness? Pillay and Durrheim (2014) write that “the stigma of being white in post-apartheid South Africa is a complex challenge.” Pillay and Durrheim (2014) write about an incident where a young white male walked to a nearby black informal settlement and started shooting people. Reflecting on this incident they remark that “despite growing up in “the rainbow nation” of Nelson Mandela’s post-apartheid state, 18 year old Johan Nel’s actions reflected a prejudicial and anti-integrationist view of social relations based on black inferiority and white supremacy.”
The idea that the generations born after 1994 will be less inclined to live in the master narrative of whiteness is sustainable. Through my involvement with youth work in Johannesburg in both white and black communities, it has become more clear to me that the race conversation in South Africa is far from over. My reading of contemporary studies on whiteness and my observations of my white friends and family’s attempts to navigate through the dispositions of a post-1994 South Africa highlights the necessity to keep this conversation alive.

I will illustrate this with three short stories relating to recent personal encounters:

1. I attended a wedding recently on a wine farm in Stellenbosch. After the ceremony, the guests gathered under the beautiful old oak trees. The bride and groom were taking pictures with their entourage. In the background next to the old Dutch manor stood the slave bell tower: a stark reminder of a painful past that ended not too long ago.

   While we were drinking wine, the Springboks were playing Australia. We were following the game through social media updates on our phones. For the first 60 minutes, the South African team was struggling to assert their dominance. The conversation quickly digressed to the controversial quota system that aims to enforce a 50/50 ratio between black and white players by 2019.

   The Springbok vs Australia test was also the maiden test for an exciting new player Teboho “Oupa” Mohojé. He had a Cinderella-like journey into the Bok team. The year started for him playing at university level, but he quickly made it into the big leagues as opportunities opened up and he took them with open arms. The report on his game afterwards was positive, but during the game, fellow guests at the wedding were complaining about his “suspiciously” fast
acceleration to the top. One person remarked “How can this not be political? And let me not start with the current Cobras cricket team.”

2. My neighbours have been involved in the lives of three young black children from a local orphanage. Every other weekend the two brothers and their sister stay for the weekend at their home. During the week, they assist the children with rides to and from the orphanage to be able to take part in extracurricular activities such as cricket and rugby. Their own children are the same age and have become close friends. The oldest daughter has had to answer more than a few times whether the children are able to do maths. “Are they clever?” is a question that my neighbours have to answer often to their white friends and family.

3. The DRC community where I work used to have a liturgical rhythm once a week where all the personnel met in the chapel for communal prayers. This included the white office personnel and the black cleaning and gardening personnel. After three years of experimenting with various forms of liturgical practices to include everyone, yet keep our reformed liturgical identity on the forefront, we were forced to stop the liturgy. The white office personnel were complaining about the need to attend such an incoherent liturgical practice. They wanted to know the purpose of the weekly gathering. Some felt strongly that unless the purpose is to evangelise the black personnel, they could not see a reason to attend it. Others voiced their perception that the service is difficult to understand because it is mostly in English. This was not the case, because we had kept the liturgy predominantly Afrikaans and the style very close to familiar reformed liturgical practices. In the end, we stopped the liturgical gathering owing to the persistent negative feedback from the white personnel.

These three stories play out in the lives of the members of the DRC. A quick reading of comments by readers posted on prominent Afrikaans newspapers’ websites, or daily
letters of readers published in these newspapers, will show how white South Africans try to make sense of the post-apartheid South Africa. Some of the ways are helpful, others are destructive. Every Sunday morning, when a DRC liturgy gathers around scripture to (re)learn a missional language for everyday life, members of the DRC will also carry the last week, month, year, or for some, the last two decades, or last half century, in their hearts and minds.

One of the ministers (Participant B) in the interviews said that in his community and in his heart lies a “chunk of racism. It is the thing that I am still fighting inside myself… is still not finished. It is something we can do with other churches.” Although we have come a long way, the DRC still has a lot of demolition work to do to break down the colonial language mansions we used to live in and prisons we forced others into.

All is not doom and gloom. From the interviews with ministers of the DRC, it is clear that there is a shared feeling of being positive and hopeful about the country and about their place as whites in South Africa. When bodies like the Highveld Synod come out and publicly embrace diversity as a central outcome for the years to come, it is good news.

We, as whites, need to tread lightly along this path, because if the old colonial imagination is still alive and kicking, this journey will feel a lot like cultural molestation for others who we hope to befriend along the way. Before we can play a role in a post-colonial South Africa, we need to become post-colonial ourselves. A reading of Steyn (2001) can colour the diversity conversation in the DRC with the paintbrush of hybridity. In the light of Krog’s (2011) remembering of her mother’s bread recipe while reflecting on her own identity, sharing our favourite meals with people that differs from us, might be a good place to start.

In Chapter 2 I stressed the importance of listening spaces, not only to cultivate a deep missional theology within the community, but to be able to hear the strangers from
within and the strange voices from outside. In Chapter 3, I showed how outreaches played a big role in shaping a hybrid imagination in the lives of the DRC ministers I interviewed. In the next chapter I will develop these themes further by proposing a change in tongue for how the church talks about outreaches; and reflect on stories from our community’s involvement with various NGOs on how the act of eating together can support these listening spaces in the journey towards more inclusive communities.
Chapter 5
Missional exercises for hybrid churches

Chapter outline
5.1 A short story: Multicultural messiness
5.2 Introduction
5.3 From white noise to liturgical listening
5.4 Linguistic pilgrimages
5.5 Sacred meals in humble places
5.6 Conclusion

5.1 A short story: Multicultural messiness

It has been a year since we stopped the Thursday liturgy. It just did not work. We tried a lot of different ways of praying together to make everyone feel included. We were conscious about language. We knew Afrikaans is important for some of the older people in our team, but that it is difficult to understand for others from different backgrounds.

We tried to be sensitive to the complex relationship between the white personnel and the black cleaning and gardening personnel. But in the end, it seems that the cultural gap between the two groups was too wide to be able to deeply connect as friends and fellow believers, instead of just co-workers. Week in and week out, we received feedback from the office personnel that whatever we as ministers were trying to do on a Thursday, it was just not working.

“For them”, we used to say among ourselves, referring to the office staff. The feedback from the other personnel was that they valued the weekly prayers with the rest of the team. We as ministers did too. Although the diversity dynamics were difficult, we did feel that it was a good and meaningful activity in our week.
Looking back on it now, the decision to stop the liturgy was a mistake. We should have stayed in the conflict for longer, mediated the tensions better; but in the end we ran out of steam. We were all just too busy with other demands in the ministry. Sunday’s sermon, Wednesday’s small groups, Friday’s youth evening, next weekend’s bazaar. At the time it felt like giving in (or rather, giving up). We did find a compromise. The office personnel opted for a weekly lunch instead of a weekly liturgy. It seems it is easier to eat together than to pray together.

A year later, we regularly share a simple breakfast as co-workers. Before the prayer, we will go around asking about the wellness of each person. The black personnel will answer in English - their second or third language - and some will even attempt to answer in Afrikaans. Most of the white personnel still answer only in Afrikaans, even though there are people in the group who cannot understand Afrikaans, people who grew up in Soweto, people who were teenagers during the 1976 riots.

It is not so much our conscious set of values that are shaping these gatherings, because God knows we have tried to consciously connect with one another. Our battle is with what is hidden underneath. The things unsaid. The memories that stick. The words we repeat without hearing how it sounds when we say it out loud. The places in our midst where we have never been. The stories untold.

5.2 Introduction

With the missional invitation towards diversity in my mind, with my pale skin under the African sun, with my church’s longing to integrate deeper into the complexities of our society, I turn to community. In Peter Block’s (2009:440) book, Community: The Structure of Belonging, we find an imagination for how our gatherings can be an example of the future we believe in.
Block (2009:440) writes that the “future begins to show up as we gather”. The way we learn from one another can embody our belief in the world we hope to create. The way we gather can also deconstruct our beautiful content. This is why the ministers I interviewed are so adamant that their faith communities cannot stay homogeneous white enclaves, while the content of the gospel constantly invites them to break down the walls that keep other people out.

When members of the DRC gather on Sundays or any other day of the week, what future is imagined by the words we speak, by how we speak it, or how we allow others to speak, or how we listen to the speaking of those with whom we do not agree? Our future is imagined by the vision statements on the wall next to the pulpit, but more so by whose opinions, ideas and questions we listen to when we formulated the vision. Our future is imagined in the intentional practices of hospitality. Our future is imagined in the sacraments on a Sunday, but more so by whether we are able to share our daily bread with others. Our future is imagined in liturgies of learning new imaginations, with pilgrimages in search of new words and in sacred meals in humble places.

In Chapter 4 I was guided by Steyn’s (2001) work on whiteness to avoid the trap of demonizing whiteness and romanticizing blackness as identity markers for the DRC. I was rather guided towards the imagination of DRC communities with hybrid identities in formal and informal relationships across boundaries.

I envision DRC communities that are flexible and creative in their boundaries, able to celebrate and incorporate the gifts of others who seldom see the insides of the main bedroom of their language house. Communities that are open, yet rooted to a core. Communities with a well-developed vocabulary, yet eager to learn new ways of communicating. Communities that can take criticism. Communities that self reflect. Communities that are humble. Communities that tread lightly on the sacred grounds of others. Communities that go on journeys, not on crusades. Communities that break
bread together - and pap, boerewors, *nyama, smoorsnoek*, bunny chow and chakalaka - as liturgical acts of reconciliation.

In this chapter I will explore three missional exercises for homogeneous faith communities that want to start a journey towards hybridity. All of these exercises are done best in community, yet individuals can also benefit from this. There are of course more of these exercises that are practised in faith communities. In the spirit of playing across borders, rather than obsessively crossing them like colonialists of old, I recommend that whoever practises these exercises should have fun while doing it, embracing the metaphor of a child discovering the mysteries of a backyard garden.

5.3 From white noise to liturgical listening

In Chapter 2 I explored listening as a key theological act for missional churches. This discipline is rooted in a faithful confessional act: God speaks, we must listen. It finds echoes in the Old Testament with the ancient call to Israel: “Shema!” Hear!

Discernment is a central praxis of a missional church. It is the first step when dancing to the sounds of these rhythmic workings, catching the beat of God’s music. A common thread of dialogue and listening runs through the development of missional theology. Roxburgh (2011:51) uses a framework for the conversation about a missional life within a changing context: “Trialogue (a three-way conversation) between gospel, church, and culture.”

The church is in conversation with the neighbourhood, engaging the local police, schools, medical institutions, community forums and other faith communities. The church creates spaces in partnership with and sometimes for the poets, writers, artists, journalists and architects of the community. These spaces become important platforms through which the church discerns the voice of God. The church intentionally listens to the outsider.
Central to developing a missional theology is developing a missional liturgy within the “local life” of the community. This missional liturgy is a way of living everyday life with others, reflecting constantly on the question “What is God up to?” Our default setting for bounded ways of being will limit our imagination when discerning this question. A missional liturgy, however, invites the church to ask what God is doing in the lives of others. The only way to really get to the heart of this question, is to intentionally listen to the other, whoever and wherever they may be.

This missional liturgy of listening is what Roxburgh and Boren (2009:93) call “weaving together.” “It is the process of using conversations to interweave the gospel into every aspect of local life.” There is obviously a lot of weaving happening in faith communities. The challenge is to weave the voices of the stranger in between the voices of old friends.

Block (2009:292) concludes that our limitations lie in the constraints of our listening and ability to share our stories in a way that will help us to really deal with our past. Instead, we keep bringing the past into the future. If we pay close attention to these constraints, shifts begin to take place that allow us to start imagining a new future.

Roxburgh (2011:176) proposes a deeper way of listening: “listening each other into speech.” It is a way of listening that frees people to share their stories in a deep and truthful way. Missional listening involves the skill of creating the spaces:

“where people can give voice to their anxieties, hopes, and fears, as well as the music that lies beneath. This is the reason leaders need to be more like poets than program designers, more like creators of the unpredictable than fixers of the static. When people feel it is safe to give voice to their unspoken hopes and
stories and these are brought into conversations with the biblical narratives, we start to hear the life of the Spirit among us."

In Oasis South Africa’s weekly gatherings, they use listening exercises, influenced by some of Block’s theories in *Community: Structures for Belonging* (2009). All through the city, small groups and teams gather around the text and theme of the week. Culture and context are considered, allowing for a diverse range of gatherings. Not one gathering will look, sound and feel the same, yet all of them are guided by the same ethos and values.

The outcome of the gatherings is to facilitate growth and transformation of the individuals by taking part in liturgical acts of sacred readings, communal prayers and songs, questions for discussion and reflection, bodily movements, artistic expressions and (re)telling of life stories. To take part in these conversations, people become members of an online community that ranges from people from a majority black community to people from a majority white community. This community is called Rhythm of Life and was developed by Tom Smith and Adri-Marie van Heerden.

Smith (2014) writes extensively about the content and metaphors that frame this formational journey. Different spiritualities and denominations are represented in this online community. Members are encouraged, where possible, to visit the other gatherings during the week. I personally attend three of these gatherings a week. Each gathering is different in size, gender, social class, age and race. Taking part in this has become a missional liturgy that shapes the dominant imaginary of my week. Being open to diverse readings of the same text, and shaped by people from different social and cultural backgrounds, help me to expand the vocabulary of my language house.

The meetings are framed within a theology that every person is created in the image of God. This confessional identity shapes the listening space in a profound way. The
meeting has rhythmic liturgical flow with recurring components present in every meeting. The following opening words serve as a good example:

“We gather with one purpose — to grow together in love as we learn to follow the way of Jesus with all of our lives. This is a space where every voice matters and where everyone has something valuable to contribute. We celebrate with those who are celebrating and mourn with those who are mourning. Through sincere listening, support and open questions we honour each other.”

Note the intentional language of inclusivity in the opening statement. Block (2009:16) calls this intentional language the “power of possibility.” He describes it as “a declaration of what we create in the world each time we show up. It is a condition, or value, that we want to occur in the world, such as peace, inclusion, relatedness, reconciliation. A possibility is brought into being in the act of declaring it.” It involves changing our language to speak as if the future we hope for is already a reality in our midst.

In Chapter 3 I reflected on the Highveld Synod’s listening exercise as a missional tool towards diversity. This exercise needs to be understood against the backdrop of a Season of Listening, which was officially encouraged on synod level for DRC churches. DRC communities are encouraged to listen across racial boundaries to other South African stories that are not commonly told in the DRC. This listening exercise was facilitated by members of the Oasis South Africa organisation who take part daily in these Rhythm of Life meetings.

I propose a shift in the way white Christians tend to gather. Our gatherings should consider black people’s experience of white speech as loud, crude, disrespectful (as discussed in Chapter 4). A missional discipline for white communities might be to take a vow of silence. Or in less dramatic terms, as whites, we need to intentionally listen ourselves into respectful silence so that we are able to listen someone else into free
speech. Cross-cultural dynamics in South Africa, especially between white and black, are loaded with contrasting ways of speaking owing to cultural differences, but more so owing to the legacy of the master narrative of whiteness. If the listening space is left unattended and not facilitated well, the noise of the past will shout out the silent whispers of the future.

5.4 Linguistic pilgrimages

In Chapter 3 I concluded from the interviews that the conventional “outreach” played an influential role in the missional formation of these ministers. Going on outreaches was the one experience almost everyone had in common that nudged them towards a life capable of building meaningful relationships across boundaries. Most of these experiences happened during a time when crossing these boundaries was still formally resisted by the (already dying) structures of apartheid.

Smith (2014) uses the metaphor of a pilgrimage as a way to talk about activities such as an outreach. Smith (2014:2132-2137) shares a beautiful story of how he took his church’s finance team on a pilgrimage to a nearby squatter camp:

“One weekend we had a finance team meeting scheduled at our house. As the members arrived, I ushered them into one of their SUVs and took them on a road trip. As we drove it became clear to them that we were headed to one of our local squatter camps, which is only fifteen minutes from my house. The particular squatter camp has close to 100,000 people living in an area of slightly more than one square mile. This freaked the stewardship group out. They wanted to know why we were going there. Was it safe? I explained to them that we couldn’t afford the luxury of managing God’s money in isolation.”

Smith (2014) concludes the story by saying their “pilgrimage” ended in a little shebeen where the group ordered a round of beers. Instead of each person receiving a beer, one
big bottle was placed in front of them. At this shebeen, the custom was to share the 750ml bottles between groups of friends. The beer turned out to be a gift by the owner of the shebeen. Smith (2014:2137) reflects on this alternative budget meeting as an activity that changed the language of their whole community.

In my work as a minister of the DRC, I have seen the positive outcomes of cross-cultural “exposure” for fellow white Christians too often to ignore the power of this important Christian discipline. My own journey towards studying theology and eventually becoming a minister in the church started in early high school when I went to Mozambique on an outreach. That experience, although loaded with all sorts of western agendas, created a safe space away from the racialized South African context, for me to have a friendship experience with a black person my age. One of the translators for the team was a teenager a bit older than myself at that time. Over the two weeks we became friends. Unfortunately, after the outreach was finished, we never saw each other again, but we wrote letters to each other during the course of two years. I remember that shortly after the trip, a massive cyclone hit the eastern shore of southern Africa, affecting mainly the coast of Mozambique, resulting in dangerous inland flooding. It was the first time in my life that I was worried about the safety of a black person in a similar way that I have been worried about the wellness of other friends or family.

In an informal conversation with the chairperson at the DRC community where I am a minister, I asked him about the areas of our ministry that he shares with friends who are not familiar with the gospel narrative. My question to him was: “Where do you take someone to show that person the best part of your faith?” Owing to his work and lifestyle, he has a diverse group of friends from different European and South American backgrounds. His answer to my question was the partnership our faith community has with an NGO in the Gaza province of Mozambique. Yearly we take groups of high school learners and students to visit one of the NGO’s projects. “I take them to Mozambique, that is where we get the gospel right.” Every year he invites one of the
children of those friends to come on the trip. We have had Italians, Americans and Mexicans on these volunteer trips, because he believes that going on an outreach can lead to a life-changing experience.

We have been experimenting with these yearly outreaches in order to change the culture from “going to make a difference” to “experiencing a different way of being”. It has become a wonderful cliché to say that every year, young people’s feedback is that they went to “give something back” but ended up receiving much more.

We intentionally use phrases such as “let your outreach be an inreach”. We have changed the wording from “outreach” to new terminologies such “cross-cultural event” or “missional adventure” or “pilgrimage” or “visiting our friends”. We have been going to the same community for eight years. The change in tongue invited the activity into new imaginations, which in turn allowed us to adopt different postures during the time spent in the community.

We have also experimented with pilgrimages in our own city. Responding to a growing culture of safety and security that labels the city of Johannesburg as dangerous, we undertake pilgrimages to all the places members of our community tend to avoid. These pilgrimages include walkabouts in the community, sleepovers in night shelters, “treasure hunts” in partnership with local coffee shops, visiting of historical places such as Hector Pieterson Memorial and the Apartheid Museum, use of public transport, and attending other denominations’ church services. These pilgrimages are shaped by the imagination of God’s incarnation through Christ as an invitation to move our own flesh/bodies into different places. By doing this we see old shapes and structures from new angles, resulting in new descriptions towards new understandings.

Linguistic pilgrimages involve both intentional linguistic experiments and the openness to learn new vocabularies while moving the body into a different posture of being.
5.5 Sacred meals in humble spaces

In Chapter 4 I highlighted how Krog (2011) remembers a cultural recipe during her reflections on ethics for white/black identity in a post-apartheid South Africa. I concluded that the intentional act of learning about the foods of other cultures might be helpful to deconstruct homogeneous whiteness and reconstruct new colourful ways of being. Roxburgh (2011:142) writes about the sacramental rhythms of table fellowship. He argues that for "humans to flourish, we need to be embedded" in a sacramental way of living. This way of life is challenged by the language house of modernity. Roxburgh (2011:142) states:

“one of the reasons the world of modernity has created the belief that fast food, quick meals, and busy lives are the symbols of success — they release us from the sacraments and rhythms that restore and root us in our humanity and personhood.”

Eugene Peterson (2006:71) claims that “our common humanity is out in the open” when we eat together. This common humanity is the interconnectedness or hybridity that I proposed in Chapter 4. It is to be with another person in such a way that both stories rub off on one another. The sacred habit of sharing meals invites us into this interconnectedness.

One of the Rhythm of Life gatherings of Oasis ZA that I attend, has a unique way of using food to bring people together. This weekly gathering takes place in the heart of Johannesburg. The venue is an old nightclub that has been changed into a space for youth development. The people who attend this meeting are mostly unemployed youth. At the meeting we have a simple rule that every person needs to bring food that we can share with the group. The person who regularly facilitates this meeting reminds the group weekly that “even if it is an apple, we can cut it and share it with others.” She
does this, because she understands that not everyone has the means to buy expensive food, but everyone needs to eat sometime during the day. It might as well be at the meeting.

The group has adapted to the “least of these” with regard to the food brought to share. Even those who can afford to bring expensive food, have learnt how to eat in the city on a very tight budget. On a Wednesday when the group meets, the “spread” mostly consists of food sold on the street corners by the informal vendors. Roasted peanuts, fruits, *ngwenyas* (deep fried dough), sliced bread and parcels of *slaptjips* (thick cut potato fries with a lot of vinegar and tomato sauce). The meeting and the eating takes place at the same time. The food is placed in the middle of the group and everyone eats with their hands.

For Roxburgh (2011:143) the table is a symbol of God’s healed creation in Christ. In the DRC the table was once a symbol that excluded people, especially people from other cultures and denominations. As the country changed, so has the DRC’s liturgical practices towards hospitality and openness. Gone are the days of excluding people from taking part in the sacramental fellowship. Creative expressions outside of the formal liturgical rhythms are emerging over the course of the decade. In our community we have experimented with communal feasts instead of formal sacramental liturgies. We have changed the way we think about the annual bazaar as a fundraiser for the church, to a community festival that is open to the public to participate. The growing popularity of food markets might be a clue for further reflection.

### 5.6 Conclusion

Racially homogeneous communities such as the DRC that intentionally journey towards interconnectedness need new habits and practices to guide them along the way. These practices have the potential to change the dominant language houses that keeps the community homogeneous. DRC communities are becoming more and more creative in
their attempts to rebuild broken bridges and to guide their members towards integration in a changed society.

I have highlighted three practices that I have, in community with others, experienced to be helpful in my work as minister of a DRC community:

1. **Liturgical listening.** White homogeneous identities are sometimes perceived as rude, loud and disrespectful. Intentional spaces of respectful listening to others can be counter-cultural, breaking down the habits of speaking without listening.

2. **Linguistic pilgrimages.** Outreaches play a big part in DRC communities. It has been a guide towards inclusivity for many. The language of outreaches reveals a memory of colonialism, of white reaching out to black. Intentional linguistic changes can deconstruct this and reconstruct an old church activity to have new purpose and meaning. Pilgrimage as a metaphor invites DRC communities to explore their neighbourhoods and communities in ways that tread lightly on the sacred ground of others.

3. **Sacred meals in humble spaces.** We are what we eat, and with whom we eat. Food talks. It reveals the stories of our being. On the one hand our eating habits and rhythms reflect our privilege, our whiteness, our ability to exclude, our cultural preference, our dividedness and the unjust gaps between rich and poor. But it also reflects our heritage, our love for life, our passion, our humour, our friends, our need for belonging, our common humanity.
Chapter 6
Conclusion

Chapter outline

6.8 A short summary in one-liners
6.9 Problem statement
6.10 A newly renovated language house
6.11 Conversation partners
6.12 We need to talk about race
6.13 Practising hybridity
6.14 A final note

6.1 A short summary in one-liners

- New imaginations in missiology influence the social imaginary of DRC communities.
- Missional theology imagines the following:
  - God’s mission is God’s mission;
  - this mission is shaped by who God is;
  - God’s trinitarian identity is relational, layered and diverse; and
  - God’s incarnational movement is towards the other.
- The theological language of the Trinity incarnated invites the church on a journey towards the other.
- There is a danger for rich churches trying to embody the incarnation of Christ as a missional way, leading to a god complex and a warped missiology only attainable for the resourceful and powerful.
- Faith communities are not Christ, but rather a call to adopt the “mind” of Christ, a certain missional posture, or awareness, or ethos.
- Churches need good theology to undertake this journey.
● Missional theology is always contextual.
● In the South African context, Afrikaans faith communities have been embracing the missional imagination in an intentional way.
● A critical reflection of the white Afrikaans faith community’s embodiment of *missio Dei* is needed.
● Popular discourse on white identity in a post-apartheid South Africa invites more voices to the conversation.
● White South Africans live with a deep sense of loss, yet there is a growing exploration of how to belong in the new South Africa.
● A process towards embracing a broader South African identity, within open ended, inclusive identity markers, invites the church to cultivate a shared sense of identity among white Christians.
● DRC communities are becoming “hybrids”, “embracing various shades of brown”.
● These communities are shaping inclusive, diverse communities with a missional, Christ-centred ethos.
● Core to this journey is the act of listening to the other.
● This act of listening happens in community.
● Going on a pilgrimage changes the way we talk.
● The gift of the act is a communal theology embodied by the posture of the missional incarnate God.

6.2 Problem statement

Since the early nineties, Afrikaners have been experiencing a massive identity shift. Neville Alexander (2011:41) reflects on the power of institutions, such as the state, to construct and reconstruct social identities. He then refers to the “unravelling of the supposedly immutable (‘granite’) Afrikaner identity that is taking place before our eyes.” Melissa Steyn (2001:155) identifies a sense of loss or displacement among white South Africans, which includes the Afrikaner community.
6.3 A newly renovated language

Developments in missional theology have cultivated a vibrant imagination of who God is and what God is up to. When the “language home” of the church is shaped by the sending nature of the triune God, the incarnation of Christ then becomes a model for missional churches to embody a posture of humility in a pluralistic society. God’s embracing of God’s own otherness invites the church to be more open, inclusive and hospitable. In Christ, churches are able to “do” missions “together”.

At the heart of this social imaginary lies a powerful theme of crossing boundaries. The complex racial society of a post-apartheid South Africa makes boundary crossing a sensitive, yet a very important activity of the church. Churches need to be aware of old colonial imaginaries that have shaped missiology for too long, leading to postures of dominance and power. An incarnational imaginary can counter these old outdated postures. Missional churches that are shaped by the imagination that churches should embody the diversity of the Trinity and the incarnational heart of God, should create safe spaces for storytelling and deep attentive listening.

6.4 Conversation partners

A number of ministers in the DRC, who have been influenced by missional theology’s boundary-crossing identity, reflects on their own homogeneous white community in a critical way. They feel that hiding away in the perceived safety of whiteness will make their churches increasingly irrelevant in the broader South African conversation. Their discontent with homogeneous whiteness is balanced by a new appreciation for who they are as Afrikaans speaking white South Africans. Their challenge however is to integrate their identities into the larger divers narratives in South African society. This echoes Antjie Krog’s (2011) search for an ethical way of being white in majority black society and Melissa Steyn ’s (2001) work on whiteness in the New South Africa. Both authors reflect on the journey amongst some whites towards becoming white Africans.
This narrative was also evident with some of the ministers labelling themselves as more than just white, but also African.

In creative ways, these ministers have been engaging their communities about becoming more racially diverse. This engagement was met with positive and negative reactions from their community. Some of the ministers have responded to the negative reactions by turning down the volume of their missional intensity. Others have been encouraged by their colleagues and church councils to pursue this journey regardless of the criticism. The ways in which racial diversity have been explored differed from community to community. Ranging from liturgical experiments with other communities, interracial workshops, community development initiatives, outreaches, partnerships between different communities, informal meetings / friendships with ministers and pastors from black faith communities. All of these ministers have a racial sensitivity and cultural awareness that have been deeply influenced by their first experiences as young people going on an outreach to a racially different community. This exposure to other cultures under the guidance of a mentor, have nudged them on a journey towards becoming more racially integrated. These adventures have given them a new language to rethink their white way of life in relation to the other. I have argued that outreaches should be seen as linguistic pilgrimages that take the community on a liminal journey towards finding a new vocabulary in a changing society.

6.5 We need to talk about race
The idea that the generations born after 1994 will be less inclined to live in the master narrative of whiteness is unsustainable. My involvement with youth work in Johannesburg in both white and black communities, it has become more clear to me that the race conversation in South Africa is far from over. My reading of contemporary studies on whiteness and my observations of my white friends and family’s attempts to navigate through the dispositions of a post-1994 South Africa highlights the necessity to keep this conversation alive.
A reading of comments by readers posted on prominent Afrikaans newspapers' websites, or daily letters of readers published in these newspapers, will show how various ways white South Africans try to make sense of the post apartheid South Africa. Some of the ways are helpful, others are deconstructive. Every Sunday morning, when a DRC liturgy gathers around Scripture to (re)learn a missional language for everyday life, members of the DRC will also carry the last week or month or year or the last two decades and for some the last half century in their hearts and minds. Although we have come a long way, the DRC still have a lot of demolition work to do to break down the colonial language mansions we used to live in and prisons we forced others into.

From the interviews with ministers of the DRC, it clear that there is a shared feeling of being positive and hopeful about the country and about their place as whites in South Africa. When bodies like the Highveld Synod come out and publicly embrace diversity as a central outcome for the years to come, it is good news.

Whites, however need to tread ever so lightly along this path, because if the old colonial imagination is still alive and kicking, this journey will feel a lot like cultural molestation for others who we hope to befriend along the way. Before we can play a role in a post-colonial South Africa, we need to become post-colonial ourselves. Steyn (2001) invites whites deeper, we need to embrace a "baster" way of being. We need to become "interconnected". Hybridity is the name of the game.

6.6 Practising hybridity
Racial homogeneous communities, such as the DRC, that intentionally journey towards interconnectedness need new habits and practices to guide them along the way. These practices have the potential to change the dominant language houses that keeps the community homogeneous. DRC communities are becoming more and more creative in
their attempts to rebuild broken bridges and to guide their members towards integration in a changed society.

I have highlighted three practices that I have, in community with others, experienced to be very helpful in my work as minister of a DRC community.

**Liturgical listening**
White homogeneous identities is sometimes perceived as rude, loud and disrespectful. Intentional spaces of respectful listening to others can be counter-cultural, breaking down the habits of speaking without listening.

**Linguistic pilgrimages**
Outreaches play a big part in DRC communities. It has been a guide towards inclusivity for many. The language of outreaches reveals a memory of colonialism. White reaching out to Black. Intentional linguistic changes can deconstruct this and reconstruct an old church activity to have new purpose and meaning. Pilgrimage as a metaphor invites DRC communities to explore their neighbourhoods and community in ways that tread lightly on the sacred ground of others.

**Sacred meals in humble spaces**
We are what we eat, and who we eat with. Food talks. It reveals the stories of our being. On the one hand our eating habits and rhythms reflect our privilege, our whiteness, our ability to exclude, our cultural preference, our dividedness and the unjust gaps between rich and poor. But it also reflects our heritage, our love for life, our passion, our humor, our friends, our need for belonging, our common humanity.
6.7  A final note

Sunday, 5 October 2014
Manjacaze, Gaza Province, Mozambique

I am writing this last paragraph on my cellphone from a rural village in Mozambique. I am here as a white pilgrim. Every year, I come here with a group of young people to volunteer in various programmes, supporting the local community and their initiatives to change their town.

This morning we visited a small church in a remote part of the area. I was torn between many worlds. I realised how complex the journey of being/becoming a white African can be if the identity markers are fixed. Whose African culture is the norm?

Reflecting on my thesis this morning, while listening to sounds of women singing, I thought that if I can do it again, I will listen more broadly to other South African journey's of becoming. The diversity of southern Africa is a creative playing field for any person trying to "find himself".

In 1997, when I came here on my first pilgrimage, I found the triune missional God. Seventeen years later, I am back, hoping to find myself.

A luta continua.

Sela.
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Addendum 1
Summary of interviews and data clustering relating to eight narratives

I feel at home in South Africa

**Participant A:** Ek voel tuis in SA. Ek love SA. Ek sal nie in ‘n ander plek wou bly nie. Miskien ‘n kort tydjie, dit sal great wees om in New York te gaan bly vir ‘n jaar of twee, maar ek voel ons het ‘n rol hier. Maar soos jy nou gehoor het in die onderhoud leef ek dit nie rerig uit nie. Maar ek dink SA is my land, ja, ek voel tuis.

**Participant B:** Ek voel veilig as ‘n .. eks natuurlik veilig, ek het eintlik job security. Die NG kerk is die plek waar die wit Afrikaanse man nog die veiligste is in terme van job security tot tyd en wyl die sisteem nog aan die gang hou.

**Participant E and D:** Ja. My broer is in Australië. En jis as mens met elke tweede ou praat vandag het hy familie in Australie, of nie noodwendig Australie nie, maar oorsee, Engeland.. Ek is lief vir die land, ek is lief vir die mense. Te midde van die ‘crime’ en als. Jy weet maar as die goed nou nie naby my lyf gekom het nie kan ek seker nou nie te maklik daaroor praat nie. Maar ek is rerig lief.. Die land het mooi mense. Dis ‘n mooi land, dit het lekker weer. Die paar goed wat die heeltyd oor die misdaad en als gesê word dink ek vat weg van regtig hoe geseënd ons is in die land. Ek kan nie teruggaan Duitsland toe of Frankryk toe waar my voorsate vandaan gekom het nie, want ek gaan ‘n vreemdeling daar wees. Die is my land. Ek is lief vir die grond en sy mense.” Wie ek is, is gevorm deur hier waar ek my wortels het.

**Participant D:** Ek het so ‘n mooi ding gelees wat sê: Die land behoort nie aan ons nie. Ons behoort aan die land.
Participant D: Ek dink ons hoort hier. Eks tuis.

Participant E: I’m an African.

Participant G: Ek voel 100% tuis, maar as ek nou dit sê dan moet ek nou by sê want ek sê dit met baie versigtigheid want my wêreld laat my toe om tuis te wees, want ek werk mos nou nie in die government nie

Participant H: O ja. Ek wil nêrens anders wees nie. Die hoë misdaad is ons almal se bekommerenis. Ek dink en glo ek het ‘n roeping hier. Dit gaan ‘n tydjie vat vir die kerk om te verander, maar die kerk moet verander, daar is nie eers ‘n kwessie oor nie. As ons regtig ‘n verskil in Suid-Afrika wil maak nie net ‘n verskil aan Afrikaner nie, moet ons verander.

Participant J: ons is lief vir die land. Ons glo ons het baie om te leer hier. Hier is ‘n klomp beauty wat ons nog graag wil ontdek.

I long for a more colourful congregation

Participant A: ons wil meer fokus op uitleef.. of om meer divers te wees.

Participant B: Kruis kultureel, oor grense beweeg…ja ja, dis ‘n groot value

Participant C: Ek droom/smag daarna dat ons iets van alles, alle mense, verskeidenheid kan hê. En ons probeer hierdie gesprekke op die tafel sit. Ons verwoord dit, ons skryf dit in dokumente, ons praat daaroor en … dit voel partykeer of die leierskap op ‘n ander plek is as waar die gemeente is so jy moet die heeltyd half teruggaan en sê ‘Oh ok julle is eintlik nou daar, ons het gedog ons is ‘hier’ maar julle is
nou ‘daar’. So ja, dit maak dit partykeer moeilik. Mense neem deel aan die gesprekke en daar is mense wat sê, ja verseker dit is hoe ons moet lyk, maar om dit aan die gang te sit weet ons nog nie lekker hoe nie. Ons probeer dit nou maar.. ja.

**Participant E:** Die feit dat ons gesamentlik dan nou VG en NG in 2000 begin het, daar het vir my ‘n groot skuif rondom die goed gekom. Net ‘n duidelike bewuswording van hoe God werk en wie Hy is. Om regtig kleurblind te begin raak. Ek dink het net so op subtiele manier gebeur omdat ek blootgestel was aan die verhale van ander mense. Om vriende te kon gehad het saam met wie mens regtig kon lag en huil. Kon saam mee kuier wat vriende geword het. So ek dink in die bou van daai verhoudings, in die luister na hulle verhale het ek ook ‘n stuk verdraagsaamheid ontwikkel teenoor ander se verhale, hoe hulle voel en nie te vinnig te sê: Hoor hier kom net oor jouself, dit is verby, ons gaan aan nie. Maar, die kerk het my nie gehelp daarmee nie. En ek dink nie dis ‘n kerk nie. Die kerk is nie ‘n klein groepie mense, enersdenkende, lykende ruikende mense bymekaar nie.

**Participant D:** Ek dink, as die kerk ‘n homogene groep bly soos die NG kerk hoofsaaklik is, gaan ons doodgaan. En ons is besig omdaaipadtestap. Ek dink regtig nie .. dis wat God bedoel het kerk moet wees nie.

**Participant F:** Ek sê dit want ek het nog altyd ‘n affiniteit en.. ek dink een van my callings en hoe ek geroepe voel is om brue te bou en die breër gemeenskap was nog altyd vir my geweldig belangrik en in die dorp het ek ook speel ek ‘n significant rol om gemeenskappe by mekaar te bring. En die bottom line is, ons is ‘n wit gemeente – as dit nie vir die studente was waar daar swart en bruin studente bykom nie sou dit net wit gewees het.

**Participant G:** Die kinderhuis is ook **ongelukkig** die enigste bruin mense in ons gemeente.
Participant I: As ons nie die kulturele vlakke begin meng nie, gaan ons moeilikheid kry.

Participant J: Vir my is dit partykeer 'n onnatuurlike, geforseerde ding om oor kultuurgrense vriende te hê.

My journey across racial boundaries started with an outreach

Participant B: Ek glo aan blootstelling, dis maar hoe ek geleer het – blootstelling gehad in Hillbrow as student, Swaziland uitreike. Ek dink jongmense se lewens verander op uitreike as hulle blootgestel word aan die nood en jy van daar af bybelstudie sou doen in plaas van net sondagskool. Ek glo om kinders bietjie uit hulle comfort zones, grootmense ook, gesinne uit hulle comfort zones uit te vat.

Participant E: Ek dink net so op subtiele manier gebeur omdat ek blootgestel was aan die verhale van ander mense.

Participant F: Wat met my gebeur het die volgende jaar is toe ek en my vrou vir 'n jaar in Zambie was met 'n span 2 Suid-Afrikaners en 4/5 Zambiers. Daai jare so-called service year of Christ. En ons het binne die Reformed church of Zambia gewerk en daai jaar, ons het in 'n township gebly, in daai jaar was eintlik 'n life defining moment wat ons net besef het ons kom terug, anders, getransformeerde mense en ons kan nie meer dieselfde wees binne ons communities nie.

My church is too white (still the “bastion of the Afrikaner”)

Participant B: Ek dink in ons gemeente, ag in my eie hart lê daar nogsteeds 'n stuk rassisme. Die ding wat ek veg is nogsteeds in myself ook nog. So ek dink as ek net na myself kyk is daar nog baie groei.. daai ding is nog nie afgehandel nie. Ek dink daar is
groot issues soos armoede, maar dit kan ons saam met die ander kerke doen om iets te doen rondom armoede. Iets te doen met werkskepping, dis my groot droom.

Participant C: Die interessante ding is, die kerk is seker die enigste plek in Suid-Afrika waar daar nog soortvan – as jy na hom kyk dan lyk dit Afrikaans en wit jy weet, dit is die plek waar hulle voel seker die ‘gevare’ van buite af het nog nie ge‘invultreer’ nie. Hulle word nog nie daar bedreig nie, so dis nog hierdie veilige plek war ons hierdie goeters kan beskerm en Christen-wees gelyk. En dit is vir my verskriklik moeilik, want my verstaan van Bybel is dat .. die kerk nie kultuur verwant is nie maar dat hy die evangelie! Dat hy vir hom ‘n nuwe volk, nuwe kultuur of ‘n nuwe volk saamroep en dit sluit in mense van verskillende kulture en tale en so aan. Ek voel ons is arm omdat ons net ‘n wit Afrikaanse kerk is….Duidelik in ons gemeente is daar mense wat die kerk soortvan nog half beskou as: dit is veronderstel om die doel van die kerk te wees. Om dit op te bou.. Iemand het dit letterlik verwoord so: Ons moet, die kerk moet opgebou word as bastion vir die Afrikaanse taal en kultuur.

Participant D: Ek dink, as die kerk ‘n homogene groep bly soos die NG kerk hoofsaaklik is, gaan ons doodgaan. En ons is besig omdaaipadtestap.Ekdinkregtig nie .. dis wat God bedoel het kerk moet wees nie.

Participant G: Die kinderhuis is ook ongelukkig die enigste bruin mense in ons gemeente.

Our money is keeping us lily white

Participant I: Die olifant in die kamer, is geld. Dit gaan oor gelyke salarisse vir poste. Jy kan hoe positief wees oor kerkeenheid, maar as jy met jou ander broer om ‘n tafel sit en julle deel iets, maar jy kry baie meer salaris as hy, bly dit ‘n olifant in die kamer. En as hierdie regstellende geregtigheid nie reggestel word nie, gaan ons nie vorder nie.
Participant F: Ek dink dit maak dit meer kompleks. Researcher Sou dit makliker gewees het as julle arm en sukkelend was? Deelnemer F: Ek dink tog so.

I anticipate conflict when I pursue this longing in my community

Participant A: Die rede hoekom ek dit nie doen nie is baie selfsugtig. Dis eintlik maar vrees vir konflik. Ek het dit gedoen in my vorige gemeente. My ervaring was: die offisiele hanteer van die tema het dit vir my op ‘n persoonlike gesprek die deur toegemaak. So toe ek ophou om dit liturgies te doen het dit gemaak dat die konflik wat ek ervaar het van die gemeente se kant af opgedroog het en ‘n openheid/persoonlike verhoudings begin maak het.

Participant C: Hulle was al ‘n paar keer in die kantoor in fights gewees wat die werker onder andere in trane is.. wat hy voel mens praat nie so met iemand anders nie. Dit is nogals hartseer ons weet nie hoe.. ons moet dit aanspreek, maar dis ‘n moeilike ding om aan te spreek.

It all comes down to leadership

Participant I: Leierskap. Dit is absoluut so. En jy sien dit op alle vlakke – hoe ‘n dominee sy gemeente hanteer is partykeer dit wat groei. Partykeer sal ‘n dominee baie sterk missionaal voel in die gemeente en die gemeente sal hom druk maar hy sal met die tyd tog regkry om hulle koppe ‘n bietjie te swaai in ‘n rigting of die daar sal ‘n groot deel wees – daar kan dalk konflik wees en ander ouens voel nog steeds so, maar leierskap speel n verskriklike belangrike rol en natuurlik daars ‘n ander groot dril ook, die dominee is afhanklik, sy salaris is afhanklik van die lidmate se bydraes.

Our churches can be creative in crossing racial boundaries
**Participant I:** Dit hang af waar jy kom. As jy in, jy kry selfs in middestad groot, ryk middestads makro gemeentes. Kry jy nog maar dit. En hulle sal baie sterk sê hulle is missionsaal en missionale gerigheid. Maar hulle is maar ‘n na binne gebroeiery. Want dit gaan oor hulle eie geld en hulle eie fondse, eie spandering. Daar is partykeer by hulle nie. Terwyl jy somtyds kom by voorstelde gemeentes wat eenman gemeentes is. En ek kan hulle amper op die vingers vir jou noem, wat ongelooflik missionsaal is, baie gestuurd is, baie werk vir die, baie multi-kultureel ingestel is en werk vir die ouens rondom hulle.

Dan kry jy ook selfs plattelandse gemeentes, ek dink nou maar aan Beaufort-Wes wat die platteland is wat gewoonlik, wat grensende gemeente. Een gemeente is ‘n baie meer Afrikaanse kultuur georienteerde gemeente. Dis vir ons, self-tipe van gemeente. En die ander gemeente is ‘n duidelike multi-kultureerde gemeente. Daar is baie meer.. anders..‘n groter persentasie ander mense in die gemeente as wat daar Afrikaans, of jy weet die tradisionele Afrikaanse kultuur lidmate is.
Addendum 2

Wholeness order of meeting