

Liturgy, language and hospitality: *Magandzelelo Ekerekeni* of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Africa (EPCSA) and its exclusivity in language

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to develop a liturgical theory for praxis that will enable the EPCSA to recognise and accommodate non-Tsonga speaking worshippers found within the church. There are young Africans in South Africa that cannot read nor write in their mother tongue, for example Xitsonga, also in the EPCSA. The findings of this research will help these Africans that are members of the EPCSA to participate in the Sunday liturgy in a more meaningful way. The Sunday liturgy of the EPCSA, known as *Magandzelelo Ekerekeni* is exclusively in Tsonga. It consists of five (5) Sunday orders of service for each Sunday of the month and was also the focus of this research. Research of this liturgy and those participating and leading in this liturgy was done in the seven (7) presbyteries found within the EPCSA, and the focus of this research was the people and their language within the context of the liturgy. The principle aim was to promote the Biblical notion of hospitality in the communities of the EPCSA via the liturgy by developing a more inclusive theory for praxis for the EPCSA.

Key words

Practical Theology, Liturgy, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, liturgical inculturation, liturgical language, inclusivity, hospitality.

1. Introduction¹

The EPCSA was founded in the year 1875. The year it was founded in is written in almost all the church's liturgy that shows pride in the years it came to being (Phelembe: 2000:10). The first missionaries recorded to have made contact with the Tsonga People of Valdezia on the 9th of July in 1875 were Cruex and Berthoud. Looking at the history of these Swiss missionaries in South Africa, it is important for one to note that the first mission in South Africa was in the year 1744 which was established at Genadenal by George Schmidt of the German Moravian. November the 4th in the year 1822 in Paris, the Paris Evangelical society was founded and during that time the first student to enroll was Prosper Lemue who was at a later stage moved or came to South Africa. In 1829 Isaac Bisseux Samuel Rolland and Prosper Lemue of Paris Mission came to the Cape, where they consulted Dr. John Philip of London missionary society before they settled at Wagenmakers Vallei (Wellington) (Scheurer: year unknown).

According to Phelembe (2000:6) in 1833 Thomas Arboussets, Eugene Casalis and Constant Gosselion got an invitation from Moii, Chief of the Basotho people to Maria Mission station. The invitation led to the first mission station in the Basotho land being founded. It was only in 1854 that the free Evangelical Church of Vaud considered the possibility of starting the missionary work. In 1857 a committee was found by Vaud Free Church to collect funds, to train and keep in contact with missionary work. In 1868 Gonin started building up mission stations in Saulspoort. Vaud later approached Ernest Creux and Paul Berthoud to start as missionaries of the Free Church of Vaud which Vaud was supported by Adolphe Mabile who was attached to Paris mission. February 1872 Creux left to come to South Africa and that very same year Berthoud followed and Maria with Mabile. In 1873 Mabile and Berthoud determined the future activities of the mission. It was then decided to undertake the evangelization to the Tsonga people, at that time, living in the North of the Transvaal (South Africa Republic).

The EPCSA has proven in the past that it is a church of hospitality, for it is credited for it and is still credited for, people still give it credit for having started the first hospital in 1896- even though it has lost ownership (Phelembe :2000:8) namely Elim Hospital in the Limpopo

¹ This article is based on the postgraduate research conducted by the first author under the supervision of the second author.

Province. In 1976 the government took over the following institutions: Lemana College of Education, Elim Hospital, Waterfall farm and Masana Hospital. Compensation for the mentioned was paid to the church. Now the last two pillars of the church's work are the sole responsibility of the government.

This information given is relevant for this study because it gives the readers a brief background on how the EPCSA came to being. How the church was brought to the Tsonga people not by Tsonga people but by foreign missionaries. The missionaries hereby brought the gospel to the Tsonga people in their Tsonga language even though they were not Tsonga themselves.

The EPCSA is divided into seven (7) presbyteries namely: Letaba, Lowveld, Rand, Tshwane, Soutpansberg, Giyani and Malamulele Presbytery. The Sunday liturgy of the church consists of five (5) orders of Sunday service, one for each Sunday of the month. The EPCSA has many liturgies, namely the liturgy to bury the elderly, liturgy to bury children, liturgy for blessing a wedding, one for tombstone unveiling, Easter services, Christmas services (Katekisma Kumbe masungulo ya Vukriste: 1971, Vumbiwa bya kereke: 1978, Xipfuno xa mulanteri wa kereke: 1979, Tivani ta vukriste: 1958), and more. These liturgies are all written in one language, namely Tsonga. The study described in this article did not focusing on all of these liturgies but only on the Sunday liturgy. This liturgy is used Sunday after Sunday; however it is for many worshippers inaccessible.

According to Ramshaw (1996:1); "Many Christian reformers concur that the language of the Sunday public worship is best cast in the vernacular of the worshipper." This quotation by Ramshaw is in line with the main research question and aim of this article, namely the development of a more inclusive liturgical theory of praxis and especially as pertaining to language usage in the EPCSA. In order to explore the basic research question and aims this research used the tasks in the approach to Practical Theology of Richard Osmer (2008:4) which he describes with the four basic questions or tasks:

- What is going on?
- Why is it going on?
- What ought to be going on?
- How might we respond?

With this brief historical background in mind which also functions as a historical probe with regards to the EPCSA more probes will be done in the rest of this article within a theory-praxis cycle and all related to the main question namely “how in/exclusive is the EPCSA with regards to liturgy and language and how it relates to hospitality in the Christian denomination?” The over-arching methodology will now be introduced.

1.1 What is going on?

In the EPCSA there is a situation regarding the liturgy in which the exclusively Xitsonga liturgies excludes members that are not Tsonga speaking. Even ministers that are not Tsonga speaking by birth are today found in the EPCSA. The exclusivity of Tsonga language in the EPCSA is contrary to the biblical notion of hospitality (to the stranger). In order to explore this task participatory research and descriptions of the liturgies were made in local worshipping communities as part of the empirical descriptive task (cf. Osmer, 2008:31-78) of the research.

1.2 Why is this going on?

This situation regarding language usage in the liturgy endured because of various historical reasons among others the fact that the EPCSA is still leading its Sunday liturgy in the context it was originally first written in. The reason why the Sunday liturgy of the EPCSA is exclusively Tsonga might be that it was written for the Tsonga people in the EPCSA in the then Northern Transvaal (recently Limpopo Province) which was then just a Tsonga community. By means of both a historical and qualitative empirical exploration making use of thick descriptions, focus groups and semi-structured interviews this second interpretative task (cf. Osmer, 2008:79-128) was perused.

1.3 What ought to be going on?

The EPCSA and its liturgy ought to be a church and liturgy for all, hospitable and inclusive, it ought to be a welcoming space and doors should be opened to all those who want to hear the gospel and not just to a certain group of people based on language. The notion of biblical hospitality is also explored for this third normative task (cf. Osmer, 2008:129-174) by means of a theological investigation of the notion of hospitality as well as liturgical language.

1.4 How might we respond?

We might respond by developing an inclusive theory for praxis for the Sunday liturgy of the EPCSA based on liturgical-scientific research within a practical theological paradigm such as the one described here. This was the overall aim of this research, namely the development of a new theory for praxis as pertaining to the liturgy of the EPCSA and in this way Osmer's (2008:175-218) pragmatic task is also adhered to.

According to Keifert (2001:144) one cannot possibly plan or lead effective worship without listening carefully to the profound power of that culture within the lives of the worshippers. Therefore any kind of response to this should be a response that includes the people, their culture, language and traditions. The overall research project aimed at adhering to this advice by Keifert.

2. Methodology

The research methodology involved both a study of literature and also qualitative empirical work in the form of interviews that were conducted with members of the EPCSA regarding their views on the liturgy. The study of the described liturgy, together with the outcome of the interviews assisted in developing a more inclusive (inculturated) liturgical praxis for the EPCSA.

Regarding the interviews both groups and individuals were interviewed, specifically ministers that lead in worship in the EPCSA as well as members who attend these worship services, and the purpose of the interviews was to attempt to determine how participants appropriate the current liturgy. Scott's (2009:189; cf. also Wepener, 2005; 2009) methodologies were used in this study, namely:

- Participatory observation: Sunday Church services were observed and thick descriptions were made with special emphasis on language usage.
- Evaluating documentary evidence: Data obtained from individual congregations and the Head Office of the EPCSA was evaluated.
- In-depth interviews: interviews with the participants in the worship services were semi-structured (cf. Thumma, 1998:203-205) conducted as well as with church leaders in the EPCSA. For these interviews semi-structured

questionnaires were used to guide the interviews, although room was kept so that respondents could share more than just what the questionnaires covered.

- The questions put to the ministers and members respectively differ, but are in fact closely related and based on the information both groups can add to the main research question. The questions in the interviews were as follow:

Congregation members

1. How would you describe the order of the Sunday service at your parish?
2. How would you describe your parish as a whole?
3. What changes would you like to see or add in the order of your Sunday church service?
4. Would you say the church is growing? If so, in what sense?

Ministers

1. How did the Venda liturgy come into being? Do you know?
2. How do you lead your Sunday church service and how do you feel about it?
3. Is there anything that stands out for you as a minister in this church about its history?
4. If you had to convince someone about coming to your parish for a church service how you would go about it?
5. What does hospitality means to you personally and would you say the church is able to be so? If so, how so?
6. What is your view on hospitality in the worship service as well as language used during the service?

In the following section the content of the interviews will be summarized as a first empirical probe and thereafter a theological, liturgical as well as historical probe will be added to this first empirical one in order to come to a new theory for praxis.

3. The empirical probe

3.1 Ministers view of the Sunday Liturgy of the EPCSA

Some ministers are of the opinion that maybe we can learn something from other churches that have a liturgical book in many languages as they can in order to make everyone feel welcome and included. Some however, feel that if you want to be a member of the EPCSA you must learn the EPCSA language. Someone went as far as saying “if you go to China, you

do what the Chinese does". This statement was made by one Reverend in a group of Reverends, even though some laughed at the statement, others fully agreed with it.

Most ministers think that when you talk of inculturation of liturgy or change or editing of liturgy, one is talking of changing the liturgy into English of which it's not always the case. Some believe it would take up the church's time when the church should be dealing with more serious issues.² This research is aware that there are of course members within the EPCSA that might not know Tsonga well enough, because they were not born in a Tsonga speaking family, but yet cannot speak, read or write English therefore a liturgy in English would still not include them.

One minister described the 'Magandzelelo' (Sunday Liturgy of EPCSA) as, "Orderly, with a lot of biblical scriptural references, inclusive of praise, confession, encouragement, sacrifice or giving and the word of course". Language in the EPCSA is seen as an issue for him. This can be an encouragement for other ministers to know they might not be the only EPCSA minister that sees this mono language culture that the church has as an issue. He mentioned that there are challenges as far as the language used and also pointed out that it is not only the language that he is concerned about, but the liturgy itself according to him was also becoming monotonous and suggested that the EPCSA should worship like people in the past centuries. In his opinion he feels the liturgy makes the church desecratory that it is like closing doors to other people of God.

Yet on the other hand the elderly members who cannot speak any other language feel at home and respected. Participation in this liturgy brings for them a sense of belonging which is a sense of belonging to both God and a sense of belonging to the Tsonga people. When asked if there were only Tsonga speaking persons in the congregation that he was leading, he replied saying there were Zulus, Sotho's, Xhosa and Swati speaking people as well. The liturgy has not changed since he joined the church in 1986(as a member then). He would like to see more change in the church; he mentioned the total acceptance and tolerance of all musical instruments in worship, to be an all-race and ethnic inclusive denomination.

² This is a concern that is not new in the South African context. See in this regard Wepener (2014).

The EPCSA also has a student minister, who is Zulu speaking and from a Zululand Parish (KwaZulu-Natal Province), who admits that he had trouble reading and leading the Sunday liturgy, because it is written in Tsonga and he is Zulu. He added that he had to learn Tsonga to get it right. When asked how the rest of his congregation back home handled the Tsonga liturgy, when it's a mainly Zulu speaking congregation, he said some Sundays they don't use it because it is hard for them to read so they lead from their hearts. According to him the Sunday liturgy is outdated and does not cater for most people now. When asked if he knew when or how the Venda liturgy came into being, he had no idea. He also quoted the worship service to be "too Tsonga". His choice of words were, "In terms of worship I think my church is too Tsonga. By that I mean that the official language of the church is Tsonga and if you do not know the language you can feel lost in the worship service. Even though you do feel welcome I think it would be productive if the liturgy was to be made available in other languages of the people in the church."

With this brief summary of the views of the ministers the next section will deal with that of the members of the APCS as worshippers.

3.2 Members' view of the Sunday Liturgy of the EPCSA

Along with ministers members were also interviewed and the main themes coming from these inter views will be summaries here. One member raised a concern regarding the Sunday liturgy of the church saying that he feels the liturgy is limited with regards to its language. He used an argument that it could be one of the reasons the church is not growing as fast as he would have liked it to, because it is not able to attract non-Tsonga members. He gave himself as an example: As a young unmarried man and with the possibilities of him marrying any tribe in South Africa such as for example a Xhosa woman, she would be less interested in joining the church, because of the lack of inclusivity of language.

Another member's response is again representative of a different opinion. Having joined the EPCSA at the age of five (5), this respondent carries lots of pride of where the church is and what it stands for and he is very proud of the fact that the EPCSA is known as the "Tsonga church" as that is what it is, a church for the Tsonga people. Even though he is very much aware that there are also non-Tsonga speaking people in the congregation that are members too he said: "I am very much aware of the fact that we are not only Tsonga speaking members in the church, but the liturgy is the guide on how the church services should be. The

most important thing to me is not so much on the language, but how the Word is preached relevant to our current situations”. He said there are bigger things to worry about than the Sunday Liturgy in the church as his biggest concern is on the management of the church. He is not the only member of the EPCSA that does not see anything wrong with the church being known as the ‘Tsonga Church’. On the contrary, from the interviews it became clear that many members indeed take pride in this fact. It is this sensitivity and pride that cannot be ignored and makes one aware that indeed any change will be a slow process; also change with regard to the language of the liturgy.

A female member raised her concern of liturgical language: “Language diversity is a reality and because my parish serves over two hundred people, there is tremendous diversity. As such, I think the bringing together of the diverse people as leaders will address cultural diversity.”

An elder was asked what his view might be on having a liturgy where more language are used and he answered and answered: “This church belongs to the Tsonga people and we won’t let these Zulus and Sothos take it away from us, these people and this country looks down on us as Tsonga people, so we are keeping our church.”

Olagoke in Amadi (2003:108) affirms the importance of the mother tongue: “it is the language in which the child has acquired his [her] first experience of life, the one in which he [she] dreams and thinks, and in which he [she] can easily experience and conveniently express his [her] feelings and emotions”. The very same language is important to the child, it is her/his mother tongue, and it is part of who he/she is. This language becomes important for the child when she plays she use it, and it is the same language that she might possibly want to use in celebrating her/his religion as an adult. The issue of religion and language has many facets and seeming contradictions. On the one hand the option to express one’s worship in your mother tongue cannot be ignored whilst on the other hand the danger of exclusivity and a Christian identity that is formed based on ethnicity rather than the Gospel is problematic.

3.3 Central findings from empirical probe

To summarise thus regarding the central theme of liturgy, language and hospitality according to the ministers, most felt there is a need for the Sunday liturgy to be available in another languages if not in all eleven official languages found in South Africa. Although there were

some that argued that the EPCSA is a Tsonga church and therefore should remain as such, other disagreed. A change in any form, also regarding the language of the liturgy, will involve a longer process and will not often be accepted by all. According to the members of the church (EPCSA) they were very open-minded about finding methods and means of introducing the Sunday liturgy in more South African languages because of non-Tsonga members that they are married to, might get married to, their own children failing to read their own language due to the context they were brought up in. In all of this it is clear that hospitality and different languages in the EPCSA will be accepted and welcomed by many especially those congregants based in the townships and cities, although it will also not be without resistance.

With these insights from the empirical research in mind we will now turn to the theological probe regarding a theological understanding of the notions of inclusivity and hospitality. According to Van der Merwe, Pieterse and Wepener (2013:9) the unique context of South Africa in 2012, which was said to still be on the road towards reconciliation, liturgies that serve the goal of greater social cohesion they believed should be promoted. Although this was not the main aim of the research described in this article, the authors are convinced that a move towards greater inclusivity regarding the usage of language in the liturgy of the EPCSA will also serve the goal.

4 The liturgical probe

Many liturgists have written about the reasons why people attend worship and also about the importance of liturgy in the lives of people. According to Weeks (1983:36) people come to the worship of the Presbyterian Church for reasons such as: they were invited by friends, they receive a service provided by the church, they hear the pastor preachers well, they are new in town, and they want to give their children “moral values”. He (1983:36) also adds that hospitality of the church is important. While Long (2001:15) says people go to church, some from habits, some gratitude, some guilt, some from loyalty, some because they have a spouse who coaxes or coerces them to come etcetera, whatever the reasons might be for people to come to church, they should still feel welcomed and that can be done through Sunday liturgy. Also in South Africa and also in the EPCSA in particular people indeed still come and join in the worship.

According to Gelineau (1978:17), the church is known through its liturgy and according to Kunzler (2001:83) liturgy is unthinkable without culture and achievements. Wolterstorff (2011:21) says the liturgy nourishes our daily lives while being also the summit of the Christian life. According to Ukpong (1994: 7) culture needs to be open to the gospel and converted to Christ, and the gospel also needs to be opened to African cultures so that it may attain fullness of meaning. Liturgy is thus indeed meaningful and also situated in specific cultures. These are important notions to keep in mind in this research, seeing that people attending worship in their particular contexts need to be acknowledged and also assisted in finding liturgical expressions that are best suited for them in their specific contexts. The search for this ideal is called liturgical inculturation.

In his thesis entitled *The exodus from the mainline churches to the African Independent Churches: a case study of the community of Mashashane in the Pietersburg West district of the Northern Province*, Ledwaba (2000:2) used Isichei's work (1995:331) to define inculturation. In his definition he referred to inculturation as that process whereby the basic core (which represent the essential as the Christian faith) and historical forms of Christian ritual and government which originated in the Middle East and Europe are reconstituted according to the culture and customary forms of an indigenous people who were originally introduced to the Christian faith by missionaries during the process of the colonization of the 'new world.'

According to Pecklers (2003: 67) the process of liturgical inculturation cannot be divorced from theology. "How can liturgy justify its pervasive use of anthropomorphic, anthropocentric (and most often sexual exclusive) language for God and God's agency in the world against the postmodern decentring of the human person?" Pecklers goes on to ask the question how inculturated Christian worship can preserve and proclaim the truth of Jesus Christ as the universal and unique Saviour and also how can inculturation, through liturgical celebrations, build up a church that is truly local? (cf. Pecklers, 2003:67).

According to Meiring (2005: 149) a very significant development was the emergence of a number of African Initiated Churches (AICs) who, over more than a hundred years, endeavouring to present the Gospel "in the cloak of Africa", drawing millions Black Christians to their side. According to Moiré (2004: 174) the fact that the TPC was anchored within an ethnic category was not problematized either in the mission church or the Native

Church at the time of the convention. It came up only in the context of discussions with the Presbyterian Church of South Africa (PCSA) in 1959 about a possible union between the Native church and the PCSA. In this context, Theo Schneider raised the point that the choice of an ethnic for the Native church might make it difficult for it to unite with the PCSA which was based on a multi-racial membership. As much as the Native Church raised that it might be difficult for the TPC to unite with the PCSA which was based on a multi-racial membership it is also different for members that were interviewed, that are not Tsonga speaking, but full and active members of the EPCSA, some raise a concern that it is difficult for them to fully unite with the church, because of the language. Some said to have made “peace” with it and have taken time to learn the Tsonga language. They suggest that the church is to take a step back into history where it was asked to change its name “Tsonga Presbyterian Church” (TPC), because the name excluded anyone that was not Tsonga. If it considered others in changing its name in the past, it is yet again to consider reviewing its liturgical language, as not to exclude others, yet again in the present time and also in the future. These discussion can be seen as being part of the struggle towards the inculturation of the Gospel and as far as it pertains to the liturgy it is part of the ongoing process of liturgical inculturation which Wepener (2009:42) defines as: “a continuous process of critical-reciprocal interaction between cult (liturgy) and culture so that a totally new entity comes into being, namely an inculturated liturgy.”

Reverend Ndlovu, minister in the EPCSA, felt that the AICs offered more hospitality than most mainline churches. He is of the opinion that this is the reason they seem to be growing in numbers more as they represent a bridge between what can be deemed to be churches that are mainly Eurocentric and local culture which might be subdued. So in the AICs people who are rooted in their culture and tradition of their tribe feel that their ways that is custom and tradition are not ignored. What Ndlovu describes here is indeed inculturation. To affirm Reverend Ndlovu, Makhubu (1988:19-20) says the independent churches were born out of the bitter experience and the cry of freedom of being oppressed. They wanted freedom of worship and close-knit fellowship. Almost everywhere you go more AICs seem to be growing in numbers and also in church planting.

According to Phan (2003:7) the World Council of Churches’ text entitled “On Interculturation Hermeneutics” affirms that there is no pure gospel that can be understood apart from the various forms in which it is embodied in culture and in language. Weaver (2002:8) also says

that the Christian liturgy did not begin last Sunday or the Sunday before, or even with the generation before us. He states that it did not spring into being spontaneously or from the laborious work of a special committee appointed for that purpose, but it has evolved over two millennia. The same applies for the EPCSA; its liturgy has developed over the course of more than a century with its roots in liturgies that are much older than the EPCSA itself.

Wepener (2008) warn against such an oversimplification regarding the missional nature and inclusivity with regards to worship and liturgy. This warning will be taken into account when working with the (history of) the liturgy of the ECPCSA. According to Pieterse (2004:5) the people of our time are matured, autonomous human beings. South African people, too, insist on their rights as creatures endowed with human dignity. The Bill of Rights, the cornerstone of our political system, is evidence that our people no longer want to be oppressed and dictated by others. The same applies at church, people do not want to feel oppressed and dictated in church. The metaphorical door of a church building should be open at all times and it should also be open to all regardless of different cultures and ethnic groupings within church.

Christ is for us all, therefore, it shouldn't matter if you are Tsonga or Venda. It is not only the EPCSA that is facing this problem of hospitality in South Africa but some other churches in South Africa as well. Let us take the Dutch Reformed Church for example, it has been known as an "Afrikaanse Kerk" and along with two other Reformed churches in South Africa they are often referred to as the "Afrikaanse susterskerke". When did tribe gain ownership in the church that is meant for Christ and Christ that is meant for all? This rhetorical question is raised as a way to help the church being anything in South Africa or anywhere in the world to review its church and the issue of language not just in its liturgy but the service as a whole.

Ephesians 4:19:22

"So now you Gentiles are no longer strangers and foreigners. You are citizens along with all of God's holy people. You are members of God's family. 20 Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself .21 we are carefully joined together in him, becoming a holy temple for the Lord.22 Through him you Gentiles are also being made part of this dwelling where God lives by his Spirit.

According to Wepener and Barnard (2010:204) hospitality seems related to the African spirit of Ubuntu “I am because we are “or “a person is a person through other persons.” In chapter three of the book *Paul’s idea of community* by Banks (1980:33-42) under the subtitle: ‘Church as household gathering’, Paul’s idea of the church is a community is stated, it is view of Paul, that one can either begin to understand the true definition of community and the influence the community have on the church or gospel, because the two cannot be separated.

Keifert in his book ‘*Welcoming the stranger*’ he wrote strongly about welcoming those who are not of us? He spoke about how experience of being excluded that be one painful experience. “The pain of being excluded is particularly deep for the “inside strangers”, those members of the congregation who are not a part of the extended family but who maybe long-time members. Some of them may have at one time been members of the inner circle but, for one reason or another, left the core, and now when they come to worship, they have an acute understand of what they are missing. Other members indeed, perhaps those who most desperately need intimate support were never invited or never joined; they may suffer the shame of not being thought good enough to be included.” (Keifert1992:29)

According to Ramshaw (1996:7) liturgical language must be crafted so as to be both metaphoric and inclusive. She (1996:10) argues that liturgy is an expression of all the people of God and all those people need to have their voices heard and that goal is called inclusivity.

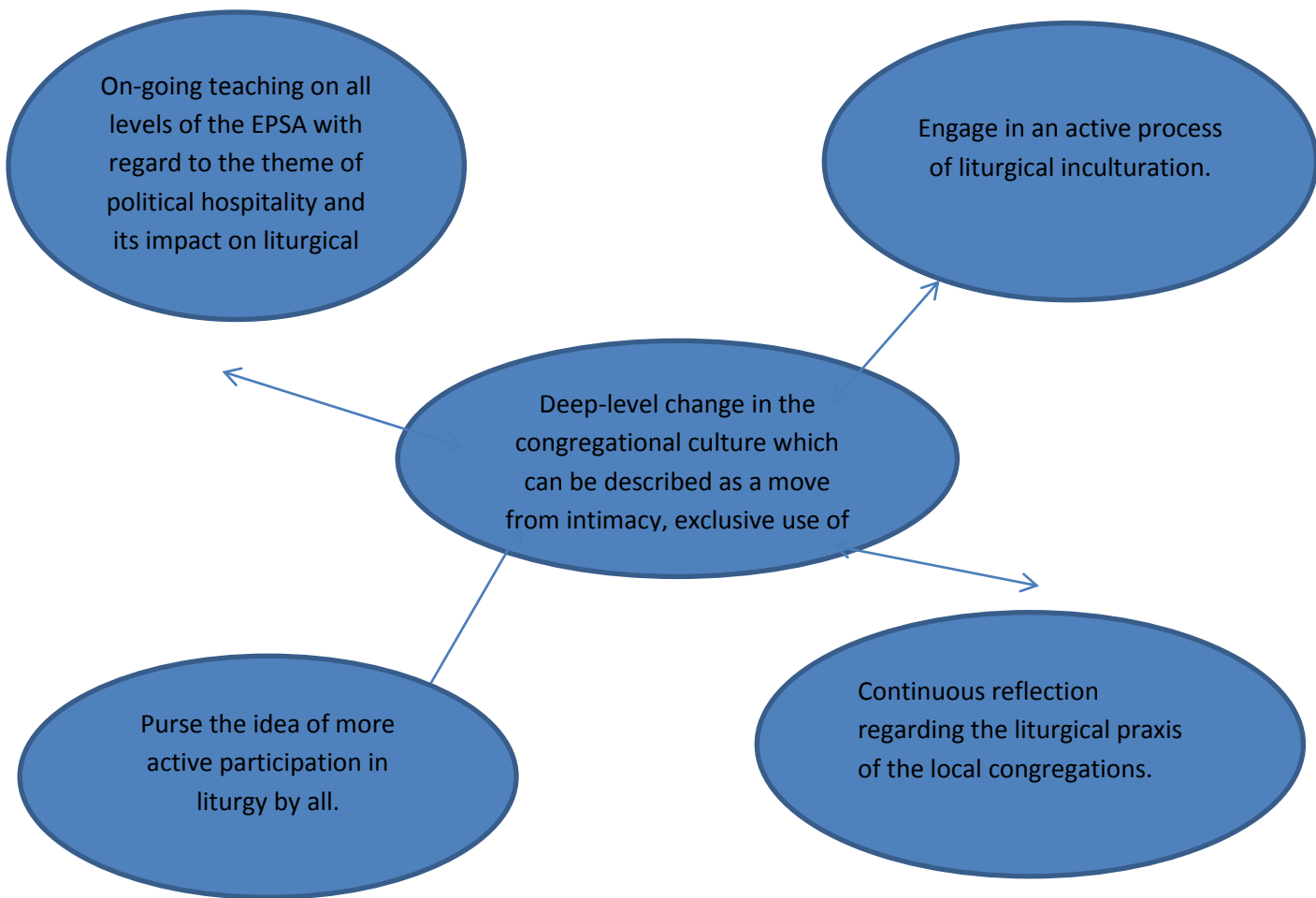
5 Conclusion

After the collection and analysis of all the empirical data and a study of liturgical-scientific literature relating to liturgy and hospitality, both probes also viewed in the light of the historical background of the EPCSA, this study agrees with Long (2001:32-33) who states that as we plan for worship, then we should replace the category of intimacy with one that is deeper theologically namely “hospitality to the stranger.” In *Welcoming the stranger: A Public Theology of Worship and Evangelism*, theologian Patrick Keifert provides a provocative assessment of the damage this “ideology of intimacy” can do to public worship. When congregations import private and intimate images into their worship planning, Keifert (1992) argues, that the attempt to make the church a warm, friendly, family like environment backfires. “It is precisely this projection of the private onto the public excludes so many strangers, both inside and outside.” Keifert (1992) calls upon the intimacy with the biblical category of hospitality to the stranger.” He states, “Hospitality to the stranger implies

wisdom, love and justice, rather than intimacy warmth, and familiarity in our dealing with others.” In our view the exclusive usage of Tsonga in the liturgy of the EPCSA fosters intimacy and not necessarily Biblical hospitality.

According to Biliniewicz (2013:246) liturgy is primarily God’s gift, which should not be manipulated according to one’s wishes’. And this study confirms this in the light of the various probes conducted to shed light on the central research question posed. It was discovered that the understanding of certain cultural groups, ministers, church elders and congregational members varies in its appropriation of the EPCSA’s Sunday liturgy. In an attempt to create Biblical hospitality through worship and work towards the on-going process of liturgical inculturation, this study suggests the following theory for praxis for the EPCSA:

- Deep-level change in the congregational culture which can be described as a move from intimacy and an exclusive use of Tsonga to hospitality and an openness towards language usage.
- Ongoing teaching on all levels of the EPCSA with regard to the theme of political hospitality and its impact on liturgical praxis.
- Engage in an active process of liturgical inculturation.
- Pursue the idea of more active participation in the liturgy by all.
- Continuous reflection regarding the liturgical praxis of the local congregations.



In supporting the six (6) points in liturgical development Wenham (1995:207) speaks of Paul who when speaking of the church did not just speak of the group gathering to worship but also of the individual believers as the temple of the Holy Spirit. As much as those who are non-Xitsonga speaking church members might belong to a large group of Xitsonga speaking members, we need to remember that they are also individuals within the church (Phan 2003: 75) and the liturgy of the church must not be foreign to any country, people or individuals and at the same time it should transcend the particularity of race and nation.

According to Kavanaugh (1984:86) what happens in an act of language is not only transfer of data from speaker to the hearer, but a social transaction whose ramification escapes over the horizon of the present and beyond the act of speech itself. He said that the act changes the society in which it occurs. The society then adjusts to that change becoming different from what it was before the act happened. And I believe this was the main focus of this study - the change that has taken place in EPCSA and in our society. According to the document *Instrumentum Laboris* (1993:49), “The work of inculturation involves the entire Church community because it is the whole Church that must be missionary. Therefore, it must never

be thought that inculturation falls under the responsibility of foreign missionaries or of a handful of experts. It is the responsibility of the whole believing community.”

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