

**Liturgy as a Vehicle of Inclusive and Welcoming Worship at  
Pretoria City Mission Methodist Church**

by

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- Prof Cas J. Wepener, my supervisor for his assistance, encouragement and insightful support.

## DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to the following:

To my wife Nontobeko for her constant prayers and unwavering support which inspired me to complete this project. For that I am eternally grateful to always have her by my side.

To our two children Vuyolwethu and Siyamanga, for understanding when I could not spend enough time with them during the course of this project.

Finally to my parents (Solusapho and Zameka), especially my father who is always interested in what I am studying every time I find time to visit them in Cala, my home town. Last but not least, my dear friend Rev Maphelo Malgas who first encouraged me to register the course and remained a source of inspiration when I wanted to give up. Enkosi Maduna.

The final verse of the IsiXhosa Hymn 41 is a prayer that longs for the unity of Christians of all races to worship together:

*Abantsundu nabamhlophe,*

*Mababulele kunye,*

*Mabavakalise bonke, baculele inkosi.*

Blacks and Whites must worship together,

Let them sing and shout,

And praise the Lord.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY, FOR GREAT THINGS HE HAS DONE

## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this mini-thesis titled **Liturgy as a Vehicle of Inclusive and Welcoming Worship at Pretoria City Mission Methodist Church** is my own work. All sources that I have used or quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references.

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**SIGNATURE**

**(M.E. MATYESHA)**

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**DATE**

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this research study, **Liturgy as a Vehicle of Inclusive and Welcoming Worship at Pretoria City Mission Methodist Church**, is to investigate factors related to liturgy, which has resulted in the white section of the congregation leaving when a multi-lingual service was introduced to accommodate both English and vernacular congregants.

The rationale behind this study was to ascertain how the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) can develop a liturgical worship style that will make both black and white congregants feel welcome and part of one congregation. There is a sense that if the service is not conducted wholly in English, the white congregants feel excluded and unwelcome. The same is true for the black congregants in the English dominated service. Hence, the need to find a middle ground that will accommodate both sides and also be hospitable for everyone.

The objectives of this study are: how liturgy can be a vehicle towards an inclusive and welcoming worship at Pretoria City Mission; to examine the liturgical issues that make these groups feel unwelcome in Sunday worship services and to suggest ways of adapting the liturgical orders of both the English and vernacular services in order for all to feel welcome and included in Sunday worship.

This is a theoretical study which focused on the literature study of liturgy. No formal interviews were carried out only informal conversations that the researcher had with some active and retired ministers in the Methodist Church of Southern Africa. The structure of the research is based on the four questions by Osmer (2001:4), What's going on? Why it is going on? What ought to be going on? and How might we respond?

The findings of the study has demonstrated, amongst other things, that there is no formal texted liturgy for blended services and that congregations have their own localised liturgies. Whilst this initiative by local churches is welcomed however, there is a need for a standard texted liturgy for the whole MCSA Connexion. The lack of a defined texted liturgy leads to inconsistent application and also to congregants not knowing what to expect.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa has to develop a standard texted liturgy for blended services as a guideline for such services. This will assist in both standardisation of liturgical style, consistency and the elimination of confusion for congregants.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **1.1 Background**

The advent of democracy has resulted to worship becoming a contested terrain today. The changes in the political arena made it easy for all South Africans to move and leave where they want to leave. New communities were formed with the coming together of racial groups that used to be separated in the past due to the policy of Apartheid. The policy of Apartheid resulted in exclusive communities for both blacks (Africans, Brown and Indians) and whites in South Africa. This separation of community also had a spill over to the church which meant that there were congregations that were viewed for blacks and whites respectively.

The ushering of a new democratic order in South Africa allowed blacks to move to the more affluent areas that were reserved for whites only. This therefore saw a change in the demography of congregants in what used to be whites only congregations. However, what did not change though was the worshipping style or liturgical worship. In Tshwane, when the first black people arrived at Pretoria City Mission (PCM) in the early 1990s black congregants were allowed to worship separately in a small hall far away from their white counterparts. In fact, black congregants were not even recognised as part of the church but as people who came to disturb the tranquillity and peace that had reigned before their arrival. This happened after decades of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) in her 1958 Conference had declared herself as “One and undivided people” (Kumalo, 2009:78) yet at PCM there was a subtle exclusion of black congregants in the affairs of the church.

As the numbers of black people grew at PCM this warranted that they were to have their own worshipping space and therefore the use of the main sanctuary which they had no access to previously. However, the separate and unequal church and worship continued with 09:00 service being purely English and 11:00 purely vernacular each with its own minister and church leaders.

When Rev N.P. Malinga became the minister of the two services both English and vernacular in 2012, the leaders meeting agreed to a process of integration. Leaders of the two services were taken to a series of workshops on how best to manage the envisaged change. When the process was finished it meant changes in the separate but equal service and instead of a purely English service, it resulted in a multi-lingual service which was a true embodiment of a “One and undivided church”.

## **1.2 The Problem Statement**

The formation of a multi-lingual worshipping service therefore required a new liturgy, which was both new to the former English worship and the other groups. In less than a year after the introduction of the new liturgical worship there was a major exodus of the former English worshippers and later the foreign internationals (mainly Zimbabweans). Some of the reasons given to this exodus was that the liturgy was biased towards the local vernacular languages (IsiXhosa and SeSotho). Change on its own is not an easy process and therefore it was to be expected that there were those who will welcome the change and those who will struggle to embrace it. I have also noted that even though there were proposed liturgical guidelines introduced at the beginning of the integration journey, it was something that was not steadfast. Thus, resulted in many liturgists (preachers, worship leaders or ministers) following what suited themselves at the time.

## **1.3 The Rationale of the study**

In the research I will endeavour to discover how the liturgical worship influenced the congregants worship experience. Second, propose a new liturgy for the multi-lingual service at Pretoria City Mission. This research will to a greater extent following the same questions asked by Richard Osmer (2008:4).

- What is going on (descriptive-empirical-descriptive task)?
- Why is this going on (interpretive task)?
- What ought to be going on (normative task)?
- How might we respond (pragmatic task)?

The limitations of this research is that it is limited to a literature study with no formal interviews since this is a mini-dissertation.

### **1.3.1 What is going on?**

The current state of the multi-lingual (blended) worship is that there is not a common and uniform liturgy and therefore every liturgist has their own understanding on what is to be done. For that reason, this can bring confusion and uncertainty as the congregants do not really know what the next step will be. Long (2001:22) refers to cases such as the above as, “liturgical

vandalism” because they have the potential to bring chaos and thus breaking the flow of the worship mystery.

According to Long (2001:23) congregants are part of the worship experience and are not passive spectators. It is therefore important that congregants can anticipate what the next move will be so that they are fully engaged or participating in the worship. Otherwise the liturgist can leave them anxious and confused. An engaged congregation leaves the church really fulfilled at the end of the service and experience an encounter with Christ Jesus.

Osmer (2008:9) states that it is imperative that there is a clear understanding on what and why the congregation or the liturgist is following a certain worship order. Osmer further argues that the liturgical worship must be based on biblical and/or historical significance.

### **1.3.2 Why is this going on?**

South Africa’s historical past is something that the MCSA continues in her effort to understand. This is more so when one looks at the current liturgical worship documents. Currently the church has Ndzilo (which means Fire in Xitsonga) website contains a list of liturgies e.g. Christian seasons, prayers, English (both old and contemporary), vernacular etc. This is said to be the Southern African Resource for worship. However, the website contains information that was last updated in 2015 and is of no help to a person who is looking for an every Sunday liturgy for a blended or multi-lingual worship. This therefore means the church has not awakened to the needs of congregations which have people coming from diverse backgrounds. This is contrary to what the MCSA Presiding Bishop Rev Siwa said in his blog that, “the Methodist Church of Southern Africa has continuously been looking at ways of enriching our worship and seeking to reflect on the liturgies for different occasions in the life of the church and society”. The lack of a common liturgy in the Methodist setup for multi-lingual worshippers like the ones at PCM falls short of the above claim by the Presiding Bishop. Perhaps, the church has placed more emphasis on occasions such as Conferences, Synods and other church events that have required multi-lingual liturgies. But this has left a huge gap for local churches that have required guidance in this fluid and ever changing South African society. As the Presiding Bishop further stated that liturgies are continuously developed to assist the people called Methodist to worship God. I am aware that there are many and complex factors that all contribute to this state of affairs. However, I will focus on two of the factors i.e. the transition to democracy and the current repertoire of liturgies.

### **1.3.3 What ought to be going on?**

Webber (1985:28) states that the worship should be an act that involves the whole congregation and not be for a select few. Wepener (2013:3) concurs with this notion in his article titled Liturgical 'reform' in Sub-Saharan Africa that in an African context worship involves everyone in the congregation (cf Long, 2001:4). The MCSA Presiding Bishop in his article on Ndzilo - A worship hub for the Methodist people states that, "worship is central to the life of the church and not just an addition." Therefore, liturgical worship must be all inclusive to include even the new rituals.

According to Wepener (2006:386) in his article titled, 'The object and aim of multi-disciplinary liturgical research liturgy', should be viewed both as Theological and Anthropological steps. The first step being an Anthropological leg, which focuses on how people express their experience with God and the second step being Theological, i.e. how in and through liturgy God is present in the congregation's celebration. The theological leg is rooted in biblical theology. These two legs, the Anthropological and the Theological steps are mutual exclusive, whilst one may dominate the other from time to time.

Barnard et al (2014:120) introducing us to the concept of bricolage which is defined as a mixture of styles and traditions collapsed in one worship service. South Africa today has become a more cosmopolitan society and therefore worship services cannot be classified into one particular liturgical style. However, the congregations with people from diverse backgrounds like inner city churches such as the Methodist Pretoria City Mission (PCM) require a different a liturgical worship service altogether to accommodate all of them. According to Lartey (2013: xxi) the new liturgical worship should embrace both the traditional liturgy and the rituals that came with the postcolonial society. Whilst the traditional liturgy as in the former white's only service was dominated by hymns that were led by a piano, the black folk tend to be more spontaneous and include drums and other African traditional instruments. The use of these musical instruments can unsettle those who are not use to them. Therefore, Barnard uses this term to describe the coming together of all these pieces to form a new way of worship. This new character is seen both musical and liturgical where the use of the hymnals is very limited and the introduction of more informal songs and choruses to form part of the new worshipping style. This free spirited and informal style is slowly replacing some of the solemn traditional style of worship. Bricolage liturgical worship speaks to the harmonious blending of the traditional and contemporary (African character) worshipping styles to form a new worshipping style that does not favour one over the other.

For Pretoria City Mission (PCM) there is another dynamic which is the new generation that do not necessarily share the same world view as their parents. Which is a more urbanised youth who hardly speak their mother tongue and have no connection with African rituals and are deeply influenced by the American hip hop culture. The blended/ bricolage liturgical worship must also include them so that they do not see themselves as outsiders.

### **1.3.4 How might we respond?**

Long (2001:9) argues that the church needs to find a way of continuously aligning itself to the congregant's expectations and a failure to do so will result to it being irrelevant. The worshipping language and the kind of music that is sung has to be relevant and speak to who they are.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) must create a common liturgical worship document that will be used by all blended services throughout the Connexion. Such a document can then be adopted to different contexts depending on the composition of the congregation. As for the PCM congregation, there is a greater need for all liturgists to understand the role the liturgical worship practice in the Methodist tradition plays in the identity of being a Methodist. The use of a common liturgical worship document will further allow the full participation of the congregation in the worshipping service and also understand, engage and anticipate what the liturgist will doing next.

## **1.4 Methodology**

Osmer (2008:5) suggests that there are different qualitative research strategies that can be employed to gather data available to researchers i.e. Case Study Research, Narrative Research, Ethnographic Research, Grounded Theory Research, Phenomenological Research and Advocacy Research. I will use the Phenomenological research as I propose to study a specific phenomenon within a specific community i.e. Methodist Church in Pretoria called Pretoria City Mission (PCM). I observed the use of liturgy in their multi-lingual service which was meant to accommodate people from diverse backgrounds across the inner city.

## **1.5 Purpose of the study**

According to Osmer (2008:58) the purpose of the study should stipulate the exact reasons of conducting the research or study be it a summative, applied, formative, basic etc. In this study, the purpose is to understand how liturgy can be a vehicle towards an inclusive and welcoming worship at Pretoria City Mission Methodist Church. This is a result of a lack of a standardised or fixed texted liturgical worship guideline for the multi-lingual service.

### **1.5.1 Aim**

To understand how liturgy can be a vehicle towards an inclusive and welcoming worship at Pretoria City Mission.

### **1.5.2 Objectives**

The research will attempt to answer the following questions;

- What is liturgy and its role during worship?
- How can liturgy make strangers feel welcome?
- What does the liturgy of the future look like?

## **1.6 Limitation**

The study is based on literature and no contact with respondents. As a result, no data was collected and empirical data or evidence analysed. Further, this is a mini-dissertation required for the MPhil course which is a course work programme.

## **1.7 Definition of concepts**

### **1.7.1 What is liturgy and its role during worship?**

McEwan ed. (2001:4) states that worship is the practice of giving honour or respect to someone or something. In the same way Christians honour God in their worship service. However,

liturgy on the other hand is an act of worshipping God. Sometimes the two words “worship” and “liturgy” are used interchangeably according to McEwan.

Liturgy is also understood as the work of people. According to the Catholic Church Liturgical Institute, there are three nuances that forms liturgical worship

- Liturgy being the work of the people
- Liturgy being the work of Christ on behalf of the people
- Liturgy being the work of God in which people participate

At the centre of all these nuances is the role people part-take in liturgy and in worship. Liturgy involves all the rituals that people participate in e.g. prayers, singing, preaching of the word. For Christians, ritual mean the practices they do often or are repetitive.

Webber (2001:29) states that Christian liturgy is the vehicle that the people of God use to prepare themselves for the word. It helps them disconnect with all that they have gone through in their lives before coming for worship. According to Senn (1997:4) Christian liturgy is a set of ritual words and actions that are performed through which the participants see as representing their relationship with their God.

McEwan ed. (2001:4) further suggests that there are basic elements in liturgy that we must consider are as follows;

- Acknowledging God
- The desire for understanding of and learning about God
- What does it mean for us and our world, especially the powerless

The three elements are given meaning through action, word and ritual. Liturgy enables the people of God to connect and to bond.

### **1.7.2 Liturgical worship**

Liturgical worship is a formal structured way of worship. The worship service follows a particular pattern of activities and it is consistent in all services. The pattern may change from time to time, however, the core structure does not change. This may or may not be written down, however, the structure and pattern is what is important. There are churches that may argue that they are not liturgical but when observing them closely they do follow an informal pattern of action and ritual.

Cooper (2015) listed five benefits for liturgical worship and they are as follows;

1. It is deeply rooted in scripture – biblical evidence
2. It mirrors the heavenly worship
3. It is historic
4. It is not led by emotion – rational
5. It is Catholic (Universal)

Cooper (2015) is convinced that the biblical rootedness and the history that liturgical worship carries makes it easy for worshippers to anticipate the liturgist and stay connected in the service with very little disturbances due to anxiety. As this is done every week everyone can follow what is going to happen next. He further argues that its universality makes it easy for a worshipper to follow and be familiar with the liturgy even when they are visiting another worship station/church.

According to Blaunt ed (2001:78), song, prayer and preaching are the standard elements of liturgical worship. In liturgy all worshippers are participants as Long (2001:44) suggests it is important to see the place of worship as a theatre where there is no audience however everyone acts their own part. When congregants take part in prayers, songs the act becomes a public event of worship. Similarly, Mostert (2018:32) in his thesis on liturgy of conversion says “liturgy is particularly significant when people of God, personally and/or corporately, experience the liminal conditions of life.” Further, Mostert (2018:32) states that liturgy can only be viewed as functional if only God is actively in it. The presence of God is essential for any worship to take place – people to encounter God.

### **1.7.3 How can liturgy make strangers feel welcome?**

In attempting to answer the above question, two concepts spring to mind, and they are acculturation and inculturation. The first concept speaks to the cultural modification of the individual, group or people by adapting to or borrowing traits from another culture. The example is a person who is Xhosa speaking moving to an Afrikaans speaking community and then adopting aspects of their way of life whilst at the same time not losing their identity (cultural practice and language) in the process. The second one speaks to who the Christian

religion came in contact with in the indigenous cultures and created a new identity of the Christian religion.

Mbiti (1989:226) suggests that this allows Africans to see Christian liturgy through their own culture or world view. According to Mbiti (1989:226) the meeting point for Christianity and local culture is the acknowledgement of the existence of God that Africans knew since time immemorial. Mbiti (1989:226) further argues that the only new element of God which Christianity brought is that of Jesus. For that reason, the church has to accept that everyone irrespective of their background all know God and all are Christians. If that is the point of departure already a lot has been resolved.

## **1.8 Conclusion**

According to Basden (1999:41) Liturgical worship brings structure and consistence within the worship service be it formal or informal. Whilst some people view it as a best way to worship, there are those who are opposed to the fixed way of doing things and would rather have a spontaneous style of worship which is viewed freer than a set way of doing things. However, for most of the Protestant churches including the Catholic Church liturgical worship is at the centre of their identity and carries with it biblical witness and historical traditions throughout their existence.

Whilst the above is true, some of today's congregations are a mixture of people from diverse backgrounds and histories and therefore their world view is not a monologue one. Given these dynamics today's church must find way to embrace all those who come to worship and make them feel welcome by including them in the liturgical worship as an act of worshipping their God. The Methodist as things stand has in a way moved to accommodate its diverse congregants in special occasions such Synods, Conference and Induction services. However, in churches that have blended congregations such as in the inner cities e.g. Pretoria City Mission (PCM) there is no common liturgical worship document that has been signed off by the Synod or Conference. This therefore leaves liturgists open to follow whatever she or he has prepared without necessarily sharing it with the congregants and therefore leaving them confused at times or anxious. This does not allow congregants to fully engage and participate in the worship. And the risk is that when the sermon is preached according to Webber the congregant may not be ready.

## **Chapter 2: Liturgy - Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction**

According to Chupungco (2010:52) the etymology of the word liturgy has its roots in two Greek words namely ‘*laos*’ (meaning people) and ‘*ergon*’ (meaning work). Therefore, a simple definition for the word liturgy becomes ‘work of the people’. Chupungco (2010:53) further argues that in the Greco-Roman world a person who was working for the government she or he was regarded to be doing service for other people, this also included work by the slaves for their masters and work for a friend. This meaning was used in a secular context when a person has given him or herself for the benefit of others or being of service to other people (cf Pecklers 2012:6).

According to Pecklers (2012:7) “liturgy came to signify both service of God and the service of the community offering an early clue to understanding the integral relationship between liturgy and mission the service to God’s world.” Chupungco (2010:55) further reiterates that as church members are currently coming from the southern hemisphere liturgy is becoming the service for the poor by the church offered by the poor.

Liturgy can also be understood to mean a structured body of text and ritual by which the church as a corporate body worshipping God. Further liturgy is the corner stone of the church’s order of service/worship and can sometimes be rigid and flexible. According to Jesson (2001:2) “liturgy is more than the repetition of ancient prayer,” but it’s a living organism that adapts to prevailing conditions.

### **2.2 Liturgy or worship**

The debate on the definition of liturgy and worship is an on-going one. The view that the two words are synonymous has not assisted in finding the true meaning of each word. However, according to Day and Gordon-Taylor (2013) “worship has been associated with the Reformation tradition whilst ‘liturgy’ on the Catholic and Anglican traditions.”

According to Irvine and Bergquist (2011:45) worship is, “the fundamental reality, the response of the whole person towards God in praise, adoration and thanksgiving. The liturgy is a structured set of words and movements that enables worship to happen”.

Liturgy is the vehicle through which congregants/the church offers worship to God. It can also be understood as “the work of God through the people”. Day and Gordon-Taylor (2013) further state that “liturgy is a humanly composed yet prayerfully inspired and historically shaped and influenced matrix text and action which finds its corporate expression in ritual, symbol, speech and song”. These expressions may differ from one denomination to the next however they are an expression of worshipping God. It is for that reason why there is need to refer to the liturgy as worship.

### **2.3 Ecclesiology**

In the ancient church of east and west, and in many Reformed traditions, the forms and orders of liturgy are open to the nature of the church and its beliefs, mainly as a place of the presence of Christ in his church and a meeting place, sharing of the word and the celebration of the sacraments. However, Pecklers (2003:1) states that, “the relationship between liturgy and the community has been a struggle since the origins of Christianity.” Thus, in the 16th century laity was reduced to spectator in liturgy and the clergy being the main actor in the theatre.

Danneels (2003:7) suggests that the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* of the Second Vatican Council was the turning point in the Roman Catholic Church liturgy reform which states, “in the reform and promotion of the liturgy, this full and active participation by all the people is the aim to be considered before all else.” According to Pecklers (2012:178) Vatican II reminds the church that Christian liturgy does not belong to any other person but Jesus Christ. Pecklers (2012:178) continues with this argument and says that liturgy is always about God’s work for his people and a gift to the church that it may continue to be nourish. Interestingly the *Sacrosanctum Concilium* further points that not even the liturgist should think he or she is the centre of the celebration rather than Jesus Christ.

It is important to note that Christ’s presence in the liturgy was not only identified in the Eucharist elements but in other extents of the liturgical celebration. However, Jesus Christ is also present in his word since it is he who speaks when the holy scriptures are read and also present when the church prays and sings.

In the Anglican tradition White (1989:95) states, “more than any other is a tradition of a book, a single book, the prayer book.” Similar to the Roman Catholics and the Anglican Church who affirm the celebration of the liturgy as a place of Christ’s presence in his church, in official liturgies of the churches of the Anglican Communion are explicitly open to the doctrine of those churches, a principle which stems from the Book of Common Prayer in the church of England. In the Anglican and all other church traditions, liturgy, theology, and ecclesiology are inseparable one from another.

According to Tripp (1992:327) in the revised Methodist liturgical worship more emphasis has been placed on the sermon and the rest of the elements of liturgy seen as mere preliminaries. Tripp (1992:327) further argues that the practice of putting more emphasis on the preaching-service was as a result of the Methodist being greatly influenced by the Anglican office.

## **2.4 Structures**

Liturgy means and involves a structured, active declaration of worship, and historically this has changed to include, in the case of the Eucharist, ritually performed and interrelate facets of the word and sacrament, structured proclamation of the word, almost exclusively in speech and song. Alongside these there have been changed architectural places and furnishings which form the material structured factors for liturgy, although the group worship of the church can be and historically has been offered in a variety of settings according to the needs and circumstances.

The structured substance of liturgy is underpinned by the structured nature of liturgical time, the church liturgical calendar containing the year, month and days as a way to encounter and reflect on the mystery of God in Christ. Also included is a particular theological understanding of time itself, the structured reading of scripture in the liturgical worship of the church, the lectionary this is important to the Christian understanding of time, however some aspects may differ in their level emphasis across Christian traditions. The observance of the Christian calendar is very prominent in some of traditions whilst in some, less emphasis placed in it, for example, in liturgical colours to denote Christian seasons and festivals.

Westerfield-Tucker (2012:153) states that the Methodist Church, “use of texted liturgical resources in a given community became more widespread, ... that the simpler the liturgy, the more easily it migrates across the borders of time and place.” The structured texted liturgy makes it easy for the church to communicate its theology and its flexible enough not accommodate other elements such as free prayer instead of written prayer.

## **2.5 Connections**

The relationship between forms of liturgical prayer and doctrine, have a relative influence on each other, and always had a central place in the convictions and deliberations of the churches of the East and West. According to Pecklers (2012:250) citing a Methodist liturgical scholar Don Saliers when he says, “Liturgy is a rehearsal of the way we are to become related to one another and to the world.” This simply means that the relationship that the congregation has within the liturgy gives them a blue print on how they must engage or relate with other people outside the worship service be it at work, in the community and everywhere. Pecklers (2012:250) further suggests that the more the worshippers succeed at celebrating liturgy it brings their life closer to a fully Christian life and therefore has a positive influence in the transformation of the church and the community. Further, Saliers (1994:22) states that, “liturgy is doing God’s will and work in the world while providing human beings with a time and a place for recalling who God is and who we are before God.”

Claver (2003:148) suggests that Christian liturgy must take part in the liturgy of the world, “must be the acting out of that same Liturgy.” Claver (2003:148) argues that if God is in the world it makes sense therefore that the liturgy cannot be outside of the place where God is, if we want to encounter God face to face we must go to where God is. This means going to be with God’s people and be amongst them and in so doing encounter God.

## **2.6 Liturgical theology**

Liturgical theology encompasses both the nature of liturgy as theology and the properties of liturgy as a source for theology. According to Jesson (2001:1), “liturgical theology is part of the theological articulation of faith.” Jesson (2001:5) suggests that the relationship between or the lack thereof has resulted in a poverty of liturgical theology and has had a negative impact on dogmatic theology. Similarly, dogmatic theology has a direct impact on liturgical theology and liturgy. The recent youth Indaba showed a lack of understanding by the youth at PCM of church dogmas when they questioned the use of liturgy during services in favour of a more unstructured charismatic style of worship (Minutes of the Youth Colloquium held on 08th September 2018). Liturgical theology has emerged as a distinct field from liturgical studies which is a descriptive study.

## **2.7 *Lex orandi, Lex credendi***

The principle of *lex orandi, lex credendi*, is simplified to mean ‘the law of praying is the law of believing’. However, Chan (2008:2) states that Protestants tend to view liturgy as a result of the church’s theology. In this understanding of *lex credendi* comes ahead of *lex orandi*. Further Chan (2008:2) suggests that there might be truth in the above assertion, for the church to create its common or group prayers it must confirm that it faithfully echoes the church’s basic beliefs. Chan (2008:2) as he continues to explain what *lex orandi, lex credendi* means and states that “before we think about God and even before we could worship God, there is a prior action on the part of God who makes worship and theological reflection possible. God takes the initiative to reveal himself and, in that self-revelation, God also calls those to whom that revelation is given.” Contrary to Chan’s statement Jesson (2001:5) believes that there is not one view on the matter and these two can be interchangeable.

## **2.8 Liturgy as ‘primary theology’**

For many liturgical theologians the central principle of liturgical theology is the idea of liturgy being the ‘primary theology’. That means the study of theology in the academy has its foundation based on Christian worship, and the two cannot be separated from each other. According to Day and Gordon-Taylor (2013), “the actual participation in the liturgy is the only means of truly coming to understand what is written about liturgy”. Therefore, Fagerberg (2004: ix) argues that, “liturgical theology is that primary theology which is found in the rites and is the faith of the church in ritual motion”

Day and Gordon-Taylor (2013) further assert that whilst recognising liturgical theology as the ‘primary theology’ there has been numerous studies into the nature of liturgy and the liturgical text as the source of theology. These studies include that by Wepener (2013:8-13) on the African Independent Churches (AIC) and the Phepheni Corinthian congregation use of water in their cleansing rituals. Also, the healing ritual is very popular in the African context.

## **2.9 Liturgy and mystery**

Day and Gordon-Taylor (2013) argue that liturgical theology is a mystery that seem to be overlooked or ignored sometimes. In doing so Day and Gordon-Taylor suggest that the fundamental theological character of God is either missing or neglected when that is done i.e. God being a God of “abundance”. Further, Day and Gordon-Taylor (2013) citing Casel (1962) who states that the cornerstone of the mystery saving events, “is Christ, his incarnation, Passion, resurrection in the liturgy.” For the Methodist this is more pronounced in the Apostles Creed.

According to Pecklers (2012:8) Christ is the centre of liturgical worship, and his mystical body gathers together in praise and the worship of God. Jones et al (2013:13) state, “For Jesus is not only the revelation of the Father, he is in himself the communication of the Father’s love, the primary and supreme gift of God to men.” See John 3:16.

Jones et al (2013:13) further suggest that the culmination of God’s self-revealing and self-giving in Christ was the passion, death and resurrection, to which liturgy adds the ascension into heaven and this phenomenon is referred as the paschal mystery of Christ. Jones et al (2013:13) further state that this mystery can be put into three stages,

- The mystery is God ‘dwelling in light inaccessible’ (1 Tim. 6:16)
- The mystery, as we have seen, exists in the historical order. Christ is the mystery of God. See 1 Tim 3.16
- The third mystery exist in liturgy. It is about the historical and the saving work of Christ however it does concern them as the past. Therefore, the event can be experienced now.

## **2.10 Liturgy and Doctrine**

Liturgists must recognise and take note of the importance of the relationship between liturgy and doctrine. According to Wainwright (1980, preface) a British Methodist scholar, “the relations between doctrine and worship are deeper rooted and further reaching than many theologians and liturgists have appeared to recognise in the writings”. Day and Gordon-Taylor (2013) also state the importance to recognise the continued work by scholars in understanding the relationship between liturgy and Jesus Christ and liturgy and the work of the Holy Spirit.

## **2.11 Change and revision**

Liturgical worship is not a static process without change. Hence there is a continuous movement one way or the other. Day and Gordon-Taylor (2013) suggest that there are numerous events that can influence change or the revision of liturgy. These events can be social, economic, cultural, political etc. Hence Guiver (2009:9) states that, “worship never stands still either at the level of ground events and changes ... the irrepressibility of life’s sources ensure that liturgy continues to change”.

The societal changes therefore have to have an impact into liturgical worship if liturgy is the work of the people. According to Farhadian (2007:5), “the globalisation of culture necessarily involves a complex tension between globalism and localism, of embracing and resisting.” This is a constant contradiction that liturgical worship will always have as it tries to stay relevant to the prevailing conditions and societal movements. Therefore, liturgical worship has to be in a state of flux and be adaptable or risks being irrelevant or outdated.

## **2.12 Liturgical traditioning**

Liturgical traditioning – is dynamic and flexible. This is a concept that finds its roots in the tradition which the author suggests that it’s not a static process but one that evolves with time. In liturgy this can also be understood to mean that liturgical traditioning to be a constantly changing process that seeks to align liturgy with the changes in the community/society. Therefore, there’s a consistent and continuous conversation between culture and liturgy. According to Westerfield-Tucker (2012:256), “it is open to the life realities, as well as the healthy renewal and change that are integral to a community’s social location and context, while remaining in conversation with the past.”

Westerfield-Tucker (2012:142) states that Methodists in Cambodia have found acceptance in the church which includes their cultural forms in worship – develops a place of worship for the future that reflects the identity for both Christian and Cambodian. However, Burger also observed that the opposite was true with the Methodists in Singapore, South Korea and Africa who have instead kept the British Methodist worship style. This more so in the white section of the Methodist congregants who continue to use hymnal/worship books that are used by the British Methodist Connexion. However, the vernacular worship hymnals have been adapted to the local languages though carrying the history traditions, theological teachings and dogmas of

the church. Westerfield-Tucker (2012:153) acknowledges the role played by the Second Vatican Council which brought inculturation to the forefront of worship – how Christianity relates to the local culture and does not undermine it.

Westerfield-Tucker (2012:153) states that central to the Methodist style of worship consisting of the four core components i.e. prayer, singing, Scripture reading and preaching are easily adaptable to many circumstances.

According to Senn (1997:3) there should be consistency between the liturgy and the community beliefs and values. “Traditioning reminds us that tradition does evolve and change in response to the new context.” Inculturation as adapted by the Second Vatican Council according to Kurgat (2009:92), “is dynamic and stimulating analogy.” Kurgat (2009:92), further defines enculturation as an on-going conversation between culture(s) and faith. This relationship is not a static one rather it changes as the conditions/ circumstances change. Therefore, dynamic and responsive to change. This is more so given that culture on its own is dynamic and not stagnant. (cf Pecklers 2003:121, Claver 2003:154)

### **2.13 Methodism and liturgy**

According to Fenwick and Spinks (1995:87) John Wesley brought together the use of free prayer and preaching services in the Book of Common Prayer and further prepared its abridged version in 1784 for the Methodists in America (cf White, 2000:246). However, this was not welcomed by every Methodist at the time as some especially in England did not like the liturgical form of prayer in favour of free prayer. This has so given the character of the Methodism which Westerfield-Tucker (2012:140) describes as having a worship style that has a more evangelistic flavour which is apparent in ‘praise and worship’ and this character is popular across Methodism tradition. The Methodist Book of Order (2016:13) states that, “the Methodist Church claims and cherishes its place in the Holy Catholic Church, which is the Body of Christ.” The Methodist Church further declares Jesus Christ as the head of the church, also acknowledging the divine revelation contained in the Holy Scriptures as the supreme rule of faith and practice. She also rejoices in the heritage of the Apostolic Faith, accepts the fundamental principles of historic creed and of Protestant Reformation. Central to the Methodist belief is the recognition of two sacraments i.e. Baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

Westerfield-Tucker (2012:143) suggest that, “Methodist leaders were well aware of the hymn’s capacity as a conveyor of the *lex credendi* and also as a tool for evangelism, and for this reason

as well they encouraged all in the congregation to sing.” Westerfield-Tucker (2012:139) highlights the liturgical adaption by Methodist in Singapore that took a different form to that of the early Methodist. According to Westerfield-Tucker (2012:139) contrary to a structured liturgy these Methodists were able to enculturate the liturgy to local cultures. Similarly, that can be said with the vernacular section of the Methodist Church in Southern Africa who have a hymn book that is adapted from the British Methodist Service Book with the IsiXhosa Hymn Book published as early as 1919 (Prefatory Note in IsiXhosa Hymn Book) and other vernacular languages as well.

## **2.14 Liturgy in the future**

Like all other aspects of life has been evolving over time and ever changing methodologies as well. One of the changes in the last 50 years has been from the majorly historical to the thematic approach to liturgical studies which sought to understand, what does liturgy mean to the worshipper. Theologians in their attempt to answer this question had always used liturgical theology, worship, language of ritual and language symbol as their point of departure. According to Fenwick and Spinks (1995:88) Methodist have over the period since their founding been continuously revising the liturgy from the time of John Wesley’s first Methodist Service Book in 1784. White (1989:154) claims that central to the Methodist Service Book was the importance of searching the scriptures, receiving the Lord’s Supper and prayer. White (1989:154) further suggests that the great contribution of the Methodist ecumenically is the hymnody. Hence, Westerfield-Tucker (2012:153) re-iterates this point saying, “Methodism was born in song” and shall be sustained in future by song. According to Mostert (2018:358) the style of worship in the Xhosa and Shona services in the Methodist Church in Cape Town is free spirited and this is in sharp contrast to the up-tight worship of the English services. This observation is true for Pretoria City Mission as well and therefore requires that the church leadership to tread carefully in their attempt to blend the two without alienating anyone in the process of finding the middle ground between these two seeming opposite ends of the spectrum. Further, Mostert (2018:358) highlights the energy that is displayed by *Amadodana* (men’s association) and Women’s *Manyano* (women’s association) when they are singing as a testimony to the enculturation of worship within the Methodist Church. Finally, Farhadian (2007:5) also brings another complication of the globalisation of culture and the challenge that the church needs to respond to going forward.

## 2.15 Conclusion

Farhadian (2007:2) suggest that there's a great opportunity and areas of change that awaits Christianity as it moves away from its western historical past into non-western culture.

The feature of the liturgy that will be welcoming shall be that it is inclusive in the language used i.e. doing away with the masculine stereotypes and using gender neutral words. Liturgy must be open to pluralism so that everyone can feel part of the worship service but not only part but worship in their true identity.

Westerfield-Tucker (2012:142) states the, "the inclusion of cultural forms suggests the willingness to develop places of worship that reflect the identity of the people."

However, Jones (1992:9) states that Christian worship does not exclude or deny the values found in other cultures, however it welcomes other cultures whilst it ensures that only those that are aligned with Christian worship are embraced and purified and put into a new context and enhanced. This might be a problem as the two are not treated as equals, as the old Christian worship carries within it a certain culture (West) and therefore all the criteria to accept or reject the values of the local culture will be based on the old culture.

Farhadian (2007:5) argues that, "the relationship between Christianity and culture is such an important one that assemblies worldwide are compelled to grapple with how their worship challenges, adopts and adapts both local and distant cultural elements".

Liturgical worship has to be an all-inclusive practice which allows the people of God to encounter God. It is important that the church embraces the people's way of life thus enriching people's culture, by creating a space for people to express their humanity within the Christian context. The enriched culture can only enrich the local church. The people's language is central to the process of inculturation which is critical. According to Claver (2003:154), "when you allow people to pray in their own language, the next thing they do will be to think of and reflect on their faith using their own language, to express that faith according to native mental categories, cultural categories." Therefore, liturgy must be an act in which people can identify with as they come before God otherwise everything will be mere assimilation.

## **Chapter 3: Hospitality Liturgy**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I will be discussing and unpacking the topic of hospitality in particular in Christian worship. I will also revisit the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* or *Botho* and how it relates to Christian hospitality. It is my view that when one looks at the South African context we have to consider the influences of the local traditions and rituals in how a stranger is being welcomed.

I will further endeavour to highlight the importance of hospitality and welcoming of strangers in church in general and liturgy in particular and most likely juxtapose it against the work of Henri Nouwen and the message from Jesus Christ in Luke 25:35-40.

As discussed in the previous chapter on liturgy, liturgical worship must find expression in the manner in which people encounter God during worship. It is for that result *Ubuntu* or *Botho* has to find an expression on how Christians welcome strangers in their congregations or churches. The welcoming of a stranger during a church service also speaks to the inclusiveness of the liturgical worship which is embedded in the DNA of the church and her ritual. This directs the institution and all its structures how to behave and what do when welcoming a stranger. According to Volf (1995:197) this should be an opportunity for the church to take a step back and evaluate itself as an institution and its structures in how it deals with outsiders. In doing so by being open and not being self-righteous.

### **3.2 *Ubuntu* or *Botho***

Welcoming a stranger is deeply set in African humanity, thus the concept of *Ubuntu* or *Botho*. The word *Ubuntu* has its roots from the words *umntu/motho/umuntu/humhu* meaning a person. In describing people with *Ubuntu/botho* Koename (2018:2), says as “a person with *Ubuntu* is welcoming, hospitable, warm and generous, and willing to share.” It is people who are willing to share the little resources that they have without being threatened by the presence of the next person. They are willing to open their doors and be vulnerable as they are being hospitable to the next person. Further, Tutu (2000:31) states that such people understand that they are part

of the universal community and therefore their existence is intrinsically linked to their neighbour's existence.

Ubuntu/botho values are applicable to everyone without boundaries and openly embraces anyone who is destitute and it is a way of life in the traditional Africa community. It is a way to life that is firmly centred on the values of compassion, love, sharing, generosity, caring and kindness. The cornerstone of the *Ubuntu/botho* philosophy according to Letseka (2000:180) is that "it encapsulates moral norms and values as altruism, kindness, generosity, compassion, benevolence, courtesy and concern for others" (cf Broodryk 2002:13). Hence, *Ubuntu/botho* is about being a source for good to other people and treating them with dignity and respect. This is further reiterated by Mnyaka and Motlhabi (2009:75) when they suggest that the centrality of *Ubuntu/botho* is it the responsibility of ensuring that the next person is treated more humanely and especially those who are strangers.

Hence, humiliating another person, is in fact humiliating and degrading oneself and it displays the lack of humanity in you or calls into question one's own humanity. It is exactly what Mnyandu (1997:81) suggests when he argues that, "*Ubuntu* is not merely positive human qualities, but the very essence itself, which lures and enables human beings to become *abantu* or human beings."

According the Fin24 article dated 22 August 2017 more than 50% of the South African population live in poverty. The article further states that this has been an upward trajectory of the number of poor people from 2006 to 2015 (55.5% or 30.4 million people), this is up from the 53. 2% or 27.3 million in 2011. The number of people living below the bread line according to Pieterse (2011:3) has been on the increase despite the government's intervention through giving social grants. Pieterse (2011:3) further states that as the poor are getting poorer, in contrast the rich are getting richer, thus the gap between poor and the rich is widening especially in South Africa. Hence, South Africa is becoming a more unequal society than ever before. So, for some of those poor people to be hospitable has become a serious challenge of survival, however for some of the rich being inhospitable is a matter of choice.

The poverty-stricken communities have been forced to be more inward looking, as they try to save the little they have for themselves. Thus, turning poor people to adopt the law of the jungle which is based on 'the survival of the fittest'. In doing so they end up being in total contrast to the values of *Ubuntu/botho*, the values of sharing and caring for a stranger. The recent xenophobic attacks on foreign nationals especially Zimbabweans, Nigerians, Ethiopians and of

late Bangladeshis and Pakistanis are an example on how South Africans, especially the black section of the population has abandoned the principle of *Ubuntu/botho* and its values. These xenophobic attacks have in the main been triggered amongst other things by access to limited resources, lack of jobs, housing etc. (cf Koename, 2018:2). According to Vosloo (2002:66) it is difficult to understand hospitality without taking into attention its divergent relationship with the following, racism, xenophobia, injustice, lack of communication and recognising the universal rights of others. However, Newlands & Smith (2010, preface) suggest that the lack of resources should be viewed as an opportunity to share the little we have with those who are in greater need of them, by so doing ensuring that hospitality continues. The essence of the values of *Ubuntu/botho*, is the people's preparedness to share the least they have with their fellow women and men who are in need. Staying true to the Nguni saying of "*Umntu ngumntu ngabantu*", where hospitality is at the centre of our being.

### **3.3 What is hospitality?**

It is a human phenomenon to always seek for a place to belong to and be accepted as part of the community or group. Similarly, people join groups so that they can quench their desire to belong. According to Long (2001:30) attending a church service for some people can mean different things, whilst the primary reason is being in the presence of God but there is also a need to meet other people, therefore being a social meeting place. Long (2001:25) further states that people are more likely to go to a place where people recognise and know them by their name, shake their hands and make them feel welcome and part of a group or their circle. It is this yearning for belonging that they want addressed more than the worship. For these people attending a worship service may just be an opportunity to see someone or a chance to catch up on the latest news headlines or topical subject. In this case the church is seen as the perfect address that helps people to converge under one roof not only to meet God but also to seek companionship and belonging.

According to Bretherton (2006:126) who argues that, "hospitality a central significant in his account of how people from different cultures can enter into mutual relations which may eventually be regulated by public laws, thus bringing the human race nearer and nearer to a cosmopolitan constitution" (cf Yong, 2008:118).

It is important to note that hospitality cannot be a one size fits all process, however it changes depending on the environment and the conditions that are prevailing at the time. The type of

hospitality and expectations differ depending on where it is taking place e.g. hospitality for a person in the rural Eastern Cape is not the same as for a metropolitan resident of East London. Whilst the two individuals maybe from the same province, speaking the same language but their outlook of the world is worlds apart. It is for that reason Bretherton (2006:128) says that the church is called to, “follow the Spirit who is constantly transfiguring the world.” Therefore, hospitality is a continuous process that is ever changing and thus does not have a final position or structure.

Christian hospitality in particular Pohl (2006:35) suggests ought to pay attention to welcoming a stranger into the community of faith, not as an outsider but part of the body of Christ. It is an imperative, as the Christian identity in Jesus Christ is grounded in him being a host or guest. In the same way Burger et al (2010:68) state that given the high level of trust that the people in South Africa have in the faith communities, the church should be taking a lead by opening its doors for everyone to feel welcome. As Bretherton (2006:128) suggests that Christian hospitality is different to the hospitality that we know or are used to, i.e. welcoming of friends and family is now known or viewed as hospitality. Conversely, Christian hospitality is about moving away from one’s comfort zone and be prepared to feel uncomfortable through being a host to a stranger e.g. prisoner, orphans, the sick, disabled and the elderly who do not have visitors. Similarly, Vosloo (2002:70) suggests that hospitality cannot only be seen as peaceful co-existence and tolerance between individuals however it is much greater than that, but the notion of that requires both institutional and structural transformation.

In addition, Vosloo (2002:68) categories hospitality into two sphere (i) time and (ii) space. He calls for a rethink on what hospitality is as it requires both our time and space which can lead to the host filling uncomfortable. Ultimately, Vosloo (2002:68) argues that in giving your time or inviting someone into your space you also receive time and hospitality, is not about taking other people’s space, rather about making space or finding space for others. In fact, hospitality requires time which is viewed as one of the scarce commodities of this age. Thus, Vosloo (2002:68) states that, “time for hospitality seems to be an interruption of our optimally economic use of time.”

### **3.4 Who is a stranger?**

When Jesus said to his disciples “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35c ESV) not everyone understood what he meant. According to Pieterse (2011:3) the word

stranger can also refer to the poor, and these are the people that feel excluded from their own society. Pieterse (2011:3) further states that, “the poor are denied their identity as human beings and members of society.” This exclusion can take different forms e.g. lack of education, skills, housing and joblessness. Interestingly, Pieterse (2011:7) in his summary notes says that the churches he analysed appear to understand Jesus to be saying, be charitable to the poor through projects and outreach programmes. However, central to being a hospitable host is the acceptance of inconvenience in your own little space. This is not the case with these churches as they are comfortable in projects that will make them feel good or less guilty. To illustrate this Bretherton (2006:140) refers to Benedict’s rules suggesting that, “hospitality of vulnerable strangers was directly linked to a readiness to change one’s self-willed and pride-filled pattern of life in order that worship of God, and love of one’s neighbour, might come first.” Welcoming a stranger into your space further calls for the inward transformation, that implies when one is extending a hand of hospitality it should be without reservation whatsoever. Losing part of one’s self is the most difficult things to do as this is not an easy exercise, rather can be viewed as a process that takes time to happen (cf Keifert, 1992:59).

According to Bretherton (2006:140) there is a great difference between welcoming a stranger and entertaining her or him. When one entertains a stranger she or he is practically an outsider in the process and not fully involved i.e. not impacted or seen as a spectator. However, when one is welcoming a stranger it calls for the changes in the way that the host does things to accommodate her/his guest. The host has to be inconvenienced in one way or the other, if not so, then the whole hospitality is superficial. However, Pohl (2006:34) suggests that, “a steady welcome of strangers requires a more communal understanding of the Christian life and its requisite practices.” Adjusting to the new ways of doing things requires time and therefore assistance from fellow pilgrims is essential.

According to Bretherton (2006:139), the consistent definition of a stranger is that of a person that lacks the resources to support her/himself. Bretherton (2006:139) gives an example of a group founded in 1785 by the father of Methodism John Wesley which was called Stranger’s Friends Society in London. This group was formed to look after the destitute, friendless strangers, the poor and the sick. These people then and today are seen as outcasts of society. Our cities all around the globe are full of such people who are destitute with nowhere to go – in Tshwane this situation has been normalised and seeing people destitute with nowhere to sleep is a common sight.

### **3.4 Hospitality and early Christians**

According to Yong (2008:115) early Christians saw themselves as missionaries, however, still aware of, “their status as guest/aliens and strangers who needed to behave in a manner that is honourable in the midst of their host.” The latter assertion gives a clear expectation that the host had after hosting her or his guest. Mutual respect has to exist between the two parties and they must see each other as equals not one being better or superior than the other. Being a host does not give one the right to abuse the position, on the contrary it should be a humbling experience and an opportunity to do some reflection. Probably, ask this question; how would you like to be treated if you were in the shoes of your guest. Do to others as you would like to be done unto you.

Yong (2008:118) further suggests that, “Christian hospitality has its roots in the generosity of God’s hospitality, founded on the incarnational and Pentecostal logic of abundance” in complete opposition to the human scarcity mentality based to scarce and limited resources.

According to Yong (2008:118) when he further cites Kant when he says that hospitality should be a warm welcoming treatment of the stranger and she or he not be treated with resentment when arriving in the host’s doorstep. The mutual respect between the stranger and the host is a safety net that will ensure there’s no hostility and a peaceful co-existence prevails – not the need to demand ‘rights of a guest’. Yong (2008:118) clearly states that the right to host a guest is not something that can be forced upon the host but it should come for within i.e. voluntarily. As Bretherton (2006:139) was emphatic that the host must be prepared to lose some of her or his own comfort and be restless. However, this does not mean that the host should end up being held hostage by the guest in her or his endeavour to be hospitable.

### **3.5 Hospitality towards a first time visitor**

When a person attends a church service for the very first time, she or he brings along the previous experiences and developed expectations. The hosting church already is expected to meet her/his expectation despite not necessarily being communicated. According to Callahan (1994:11) the hosts must ask themselves some questions, in order to meet these expectations. First, if it was my first time in this service what would a warm welcome feel like? What kind of experience will make me want to come back? What kind of liturgical worship will make me

have an encounter with God? In answering these set of questions with outright honesty will be the right step towards creating a hospitable welcome/environment.

One of the challenges for churches today is that they have become immune to vulnerable members of our society and little or no compassion is shown anymore. This speaks directly to what Bretherton (2006:139) is referring to as the abuse of hospitality by the host – the church has turned a blind-eye on the destitute, vulnerable and friendless strangers. Hospitality is an exercise that the church will fail on from time to time however it does not mean that she must abandon her responsibility. Thus, Long (2001:28) suggests that maybe the formation of ‘smaller group ministry’ will be able to bridge the gap and thus create a more intimate and relational environment. This is in response to what Long (2001:28) has observed and states “today’s congregants value more intimacy, relationship, friendship and warm environment where they can have sense of belonging.”

In the Methodist Church there is class system that was introduced during the time of John Wesley. Each class comprises of 12 members even though it’s no longer the case at Pretoria City Mission (PCM), the numbers are higher than 12. Each member of the church belongs to a class and new people who become part of the church are allocated one. Whilst, this is working for people who are members of the Methodist Church connexionally and new joiners, it excludes new and permanent visitors. Permanent visitors are made of different categories of individual, those who love the Methodist Church but do not want to be a full member and those who belong to other denominations or those that are new in the city and are still looking for a worship home. For those who have a class, they are able to know each other as they meet fortnightly. The class further allows a space for class members to share their experiences in their Christian journeys – by answering the famous Methodist Church question, “how is it with your soul?”. This allows class members to share joyful and sad moments and God has journeyed with them in all spheres of their lives.

### **3.6 Hospitality and Christian witness**

The parable of the great banquet as recorded by Luke 14:12-24 is a good example of hospitality in amongst the many parables taught by Jesus Christ. In verse 13, Jesus is more forthright on who should be invited to the banquet i.e. “the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind.” The list of people that Jesus Christ gives is of those people who were treated or seen as outcasts by society including the religion authorities. According to Wepener (2009:85), “a meal is also a

social institution that defines borders, so that it becomes clear who is ‘in’ and who ‘out’.” Jesus in this parable according Wepener (2009:85) is challenging the *status quo* and not only that but is also building bridges that will connect those that were excluded with those that are at the table. Wepener (2009:88), further highlights the exclusion of women and that it was exclusively meant for men. Jesus’ invitation is open to everyone Jew, Gentile, men and women.

Similar, to the above parable Bretherton (2006:139) states that the example of hospitality for Christians should be how Christians relate to their neighbours (cf Matt 5:2). This calls for Christians to be generous to others especially to those that are poor. In contrast to Henkela’s (2014:6) assertion on how the local congregants of Central Methodist Church (CMC) displayed inhospitable treatment toward the Zimbabwean asylum seekers. The Christian hospitality must be about caring more for the less privileged and vulnerable members of community.

With regard to the practice of hospitality, Yong (2008:115) argues that it is not solely a Christian affair to only direct hospitality to fellow Christians, it however should be to strangers as well. Even more so in the light of Luke’s parable, as some vulnerable individuals may exist inside the church but it ought to be an open practice to show the love of God to all in the world (see John 3:16). Hence Yong (2008:101) further declares that, “Jesus as the paradigm of hospitality because he represents and embodies the hospitality of God.”

### **3.6 Hospitality and Henri Nouwen**

Henri Nouwen introduces us to a new manner of thinking when confronted with the question of who is the stranger. In Nouwen’s (1997:29) view in giving the answer to this question should go beyond the destitute but also to include the members of society with disabilities. In his book *Adam God’s Beloved* he gives us a story how he came to know Adam (young man) who was a disabled resident at *L’Arche*’s mission. Working with Adam who literally could not do a thing for himself and Nouwen was given the responsibility to waking him up, bathing, clothing, feeding and take him to his daily programme.

It is during his daily encounters with Adam (guest) that he made a spiritual connection with him. Whilst the two had not spoken to each other regarding how Adam felt about his host (Nouwen) but love was experienced at least from Nouwen’s side. As a host Nouwen had to make his guest feel hospitable or welcomed. Nouwen narrates how things changed over time and he could no longer see Adam as a stranger and started to talk to him even though he could not say a word of reply. In his silence and in the quiet he felt an assurance that they were

friends, such that Adam was no longer the guest but the host. His presence in Nouwen's life brought calmness, and their moments together were a time of deep spiritual reflection for Nouwen. As such Nouwen claims the love that he shared with Adam was that of friends, brothers, bonded in their heart. The love that was inexplicably visible in Jesus, where everyone it touched found healing. Adam touched the life of Nouwen claimed in Nouwen (1997:43) that "by his life invited me to receive his unique gift, wrapped in weakness but given me transformation."

### **3.7 Hospitality and the other**

Hospitality to a stranger brings along itself massive risks that the host must not be blinded to, as it is easy for the host to fall into a trap for overlooking even the obvious sign in the quest to make the stranger feel welcomed. According to Hankela (2014:6) when the Zimbabwean asylum seekers took accommodation at the Central Methodist Church (CMC) in Johannesburg it created tension between the congregants and the asylum seekers who stayed inside the church and its surroundings. The hostility displayed by the congregants emanated from what they said was the lack of respect shown by their guests. Similarly, the asylum seekers also felt unwelcome as the local congregants did not want to sit close to them even during worship. This was a clear show of hostility, which was not only anti-*Ubuntu* but also totally against their principles and Christian values. According to Volf (1995:199) that when an individual has become a follower of Christ, she or he is a new being and the old identity has passed. Volf (1995:199) further suggests once the spirit of God breaks down the walls of self-enclosed universe that we living in and calls us to be a new creation with a new identity which then we become a 'catholic personality'. In describing the new identity Volf (1995:199) states that the 'catholic personality' is one that, "is enriched by otherness, a personality which is only because multiple others have been reflected in it in a particular way".

Hence, the treatment Henkela (2014:6) describes that the local congregant meted against their fellow human being is not that of a 'catholic personality' as stated by Volf.

According to an article Mail & Guardian titled, 'Uncertain future for the migrants at Methodist Church' by Tabela Timse (01 February 2010) the Johannesburg Central Methodist Church (Albert Street), through Bishop Paul Verryn housed more than 2000 foreign nationals of whom 80% were Zimbabwean. Who came to South Africa seeking political asylum. Whilst the welcoming of the stranger was welcomed by the church but what became a problem was when

the guests started to hold the host hostage. Bishop Paul Verryn was quoted saying, “the church had never turned away a homeless person in 20 years.” At the time when the article was written there were claims from the provincial health official Molebatsi Bopape of children being abused inside the church premises by some of the church guests. Central to this accusation is the controversy mentioned by Chisale (2016:21) of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (URMs), whom Bishop Verryn claims have been failed by society and have come to the church as their place of hope. However, Bishop Verryn (host) was adamant that the claims were false and the police had failed to come up with any evidence when they were asked to investigate. Interestingly, the article shows that the host has to ensure that the guests respected the host and behaved in a manner that does not embarrass the host. Hence, Yong (2010:122) further suggests that whilst trying to make a stranger hospitable there is a need to engage oneself by asking difficult questions such as, “what if the stranger is not only a stranger but also an enemy or the devil himself?” Therefore, while it is important to make the stranger feel welcome there must clear guidelines as the stranger is welcomed e.g. the stranger’s name must be known otherwise the risk would be attracting ‘wolves clad in the sheep skin’. Whilst it is important to be cautious of the risk of hospitality, Constantineanu (2018:111) reminds us that, “to welcome someone, to offer a hospitable place for a stranger is an expression of, and a witness, to the great drama of God’s redemption, a sign of the new world that Jesus Christ has set in motion.”

### **3.8 Conclusion**

People who attend church services as Long (2001:28) suggests are not only there to encounter God but also to make acquaintances or seek acceptance into a particular group or circle. This is more evident in the Methodist Church especially the black congregation where belonging seems to be a big issue i.e. membership to men and women organisations. PCM as a church in the inner city of Tshwane has people coming in and out of the church who are not necessarily members of the church and some do not want to be members due to various reasons. The Methodist Church in trying to accord these individuals some form of status has created a category of membership call Adherents (not full members of the church) who attend worship services, some regularly. In this way they feel that they belong somewhere.

It is therefore important to observe that hospitality is embedded in the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* and it correctly captures and its communal character as it states that ‘*umntu ngumntu ngabantu*’ (a person is a person through other people) further illustrating that there is not even

a single person that can exist on his or her own. Hence, in Christian hospitality for a stranger to feel welcomed, it takes a deliberate action from another person to show kindness, courtesy and friendliness.

According to Newlands & Smith (2010:4) “Hospitality is a hard test which we will regularly fail. But at least we can try to keep the aspiration before us.” Therefore, what we do wrong today should give us the impetus to work even harder to achieve a better and more hospitable experience for the less fortunate. I want to suggest that hospitality is not an end but a journey of humanity that seeks to know each other better. The Henri Nouwen story shows how a host can end up being hosted by someone who is her or his guest. Being hospitable to one another gives us an opportunity to find ourselves through other people, and see the revelation of God in them or through them.

It is for this reason that Long (2001:28) suggests that the church has to consider the introduction of what he calls a ‘warmup service’ which has in it relational and intimacy-oriented components such as name tags, easy to sing hymns and ‘informal heart prayers’. This name tags will be worn by the usher at the door and those whose task is to welcome the stranger. The name tag makes it easy to be identified and visible. In some churches ushers have a special uniform that makes it easy to identify them.

The church must enculturate the *Ubuntu* philosophy in their hospitality so that everyone can understand Christian hospitality from their cultural background and ritual. How the church welcomes or shows hospitality to new members is fundamental to their mission as ambassadors of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Vosloo (2002:70) concludes that hospitality requires both institutional and structural transformation otherwise it will be superficial.

## **Chapter 4: Liturgical Patterns – Global, South Africa and Methodist Church**

### **4.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I will look broadly at liturgical worship patterns in South Africa, the Methodist Church in general and at Pretoria City Mission in particular in the past and the present. The central question that I will attempt to answer is “what’s going on” in the three areas of interest. I will try to also look at global trends, how the South African and the local context fits within them. It is important that we also understand how the past influenced the behaviour of the church today, and what liturgical changes have to take place so that the church remains relevant in this dynamic and ever challenging environment i.e. political, socio-economically, demographically etc.

The church needs to find a way to respond to these challenges and can’t treat them as they do not exist or think that they will disappear. The Methodist Church of Southern African (MCSA) throughout the Connexion must find a simple and easy liturgy to replicate. This can serve as a template for all congregations who have multi-lingual services, they can adopt or replicate and adapt to their local environments.

According to Chan (2008:1) liturgy is a manner in which God reveals himself to the worshippers or people. If this statement is true? The MCSA has not found a liturgical practice that will enable the people to have an encounter with God without necessarily excluding others in the process. However there are special liturgies prepared for conferences, induction services and Synods and other special occasions. The most obvious is the gap that still exists for multi-lingual Sunday services which does not have its texted common liturgy and has not been seen as an issue by the church.

### **4.2 Liturgical Inculturation**

The history of the Christian religion is clearly documented and recorded that when Christianity came to South African shores it was clad according to Letšosa (2008:87) with an agenda to impose on the indigenous African western rituals. According to Letšosa (2008:87) there existed a thinking that seemed to suggest that everything that was good for worship was what the

westerners brought with them. This thinking or mentality further suggested that all African ritual practices were seen as pagan and had no room in the worship liturgy. Letšosa (2008:87) further suggests that a meaningful liturgical worship for the African /blacks in South Africa was that which takes their own humanity and rituals to the centre of their worship. Otherwise blacks will always remain in the periphery of Christian worship especially in the mainstream churches. The exclusion of black rituals in how God is worshipped, Lartey (2013:41), argues makes them copy cats by imitating and regurgitating the theology and rituals of the western protestant denominations.

This is more obvious in the churches in the former white suburban areas where the African people are expected to join in the set liturgy which is wholly western and does not even recognise their presence. Lartey (2013:41) further states that the lack of transformation or the continuation of the hostility is because of the institution's resistance to change and not wanting to let go of their colonial past. Likewise, Chupungco (1982:62) argues that liturgical pluralism can only be true if liturgy is imbedded into the rituals and the culture of the people. If liturgical pluralism is achieved Chupungco (1982:62) further states there should be no conflict between the way people live their lives and liturgy. Further, Chupungco (2010:21) states that, "there is a need to produce a sense of harmony among the different cultural symbols, a kind of unity among various elements, an eloquent symbol of multicultural and multi-ethnic community that is gathered as a liturgical assembly. This form of inculturation affirms that in the sight of God and the Church all races and ethnic groups are equal. It means that all languages are suitable for the worship of God."

According to Senn (1997:4), "liturgy is the activity in which the life and mission of the church are paradigmatically and centrally expressed." Therefore, the church ought to consider the experiences of black people and who God is to them otherwise it is similar to worshipping a foreign God (cf Letšosa, 2008:90; Chupungco, 1982:62). Further, Letšosa (2008:90) states that, "it is important that liturgy should reflect the local culture but that it should also contain some of the traditional and historic trends of the catholic Christian fellowship." I want to suggest that given the above the church has to look deeply into liturgical inculturation, and open worship to everyone. I will unpack more in the next topic.

### **4.3 Liturgy and colonialism**

The history of the Christianity in South Africa is no different from other countries in the African continent. Christianity came to South Africa with its twin partner and that is colonialism. It is a fact that the church was at the centre of both the colonial and Apartheid eras, this was not an accident. According to Balia (1991:16) the early missionary work was seen as a vehicle to “civilizing rude and barbarous people, improving their habits, and bringing them to a saving knowledge of the Christian faith.” It is for this reason that Letšosa (2008:90) states that this mentality was extended to liturgy as Africans/blacks were expected just to follow the already set out by those who claim to have introduced them to Christianity. This implied that black people had nothing to offer but to accept what is already there as standard practice.

The scenario above has somewhat changed as Barnard (2014:13) articulates the liturgical worship as, “a landscape that has no centre and that therefore is radically a-centric.” If so, it also means that liturgy should be open to new ways of doing things and accept contributions from all those that participate in it. This further re-iterates the fact that even African rituals should have a place in worship, which will make them feel at home and have a sense of belonging. However, it should be made clear that not all the rituals may be appropriate but those that are not in direct conflict with Christian teaching and way of life. As a result of the church hostility towards the African way of life Semenya and Letšosa (2013:6) argue that it has led to the loss of members by the mainstream churches i.e. Roman Catholic, Reformed, Anglican, Methodist etc. Semenya and Letšosa (2013:6) further suggest that, “people today believe in what they can see and touch.” Whilst this may be true, it is also about what they can identify with that brings meaning to their lives. Lartey (2013:x) decries the role that African religious scholar, practitioners and theologian play in resisting the inculturation of the African cultures and ritual in worship by ensuring that the European liturgical worship is protected.

Liturgical worship for a black South African must allow her or him to express who she or he is, and failure to express oneself is tantamount to servicing God in a foreign practice. If liturgy is truly a celebration between God and his people then when people come together in worship, that must be an authentic exercise and without any pretence. Similarly, Mostert (2017:33) suggests that in liturgy people are acknowledging who God is and at the same time he actively participates in it. He further states that a liturgy without an active God in it is like a vehicle without an engine and therefore cannot be considered to be functional. Summarily, we can deduce that there can be no encounter between God and his people in such circumstances. Therefore, Hughes (2003:143) concludes that worship is an open yet fluid medium that enables

God and the people to interact. Hughes (2003:143) sees worship like an open space that allows God to show case his presence amongst his people and dwell with them. Similarly, Barnard (2014:13) suggests that, “liturgical ritual may be positioned somewhere on the sliding scale between connectedness and rootedness, between being captured in the flow of permanent transition and being rooted in a more or less invented tradition.”

The Methodist Church Southern Africa (MCSA) whilst it has traditional liturgies that deals with different services both in English and the vernacular this seems to be more influenced by what was commissioned by the British Methodist Church. It seems that this is so because of the Methodist Church’s origins.

#### **4.4 The Methodist Church Liturgy**

Westerfield-Tucker (2012:153) states that the Methodist historical formation makes it a movement in motion that was focused on evangelism and an emphasis on the spreading of spiritual holiness. The Methodist liturgical worship was not confined to specific spaces and would go to where people are or congregate. According to Westerfield-Tucker (2012:133) the Methodists in their early days used any open space for worship where the word of God could be clearly heard when read and preached. Contrary to the above Mostert (2018:33) states that liturgy takes place in the sacred space in the church building, however this is different with some of the indigenous churches like the Zionist, Shembe who uses open areas (outside/ open air). It is for this reason that it is important to note even in these cases there are set boundaries physically (white stones and some using flags) that serves to regulate and control the proceedings. Mostert (2018:33) further states that, “the space is still very much controlled by the Christian worshippers.” Liturgy is accordingly concerned with boundaries and space and matters that are related to liturgical control and control of space. However, it also brings into question to what happens in the case where there is no controlled space.

According to Westerfield-Tucker (2012:153) who states that, “the pragmatic Methodist quickly discovered that informal worship consisting of the core components of prayer, singing, Scripture reading and preaching could easily be adapted to most situations.” This was mainly based on informal liturgy without anything written down. Westerfield-Tucker (2012:153) also argues that the late adoption of the text liturgy and a simpler liturgical format was earlier used as it could be easily followed by all. In the same way Outler (1961:25) states that, “God’s good news is proclaimed in words and symbols, it is celebrated in liturgies and rituals, but it is

communicated by corporate life and example.” Likewise, White (1989:170) suggests that the Methodist Church in America has as early as in 1970 recognised the need for liturgy to be inclusive and expressive of other races within the church. The church did not only look at diversity in racial terms but also the use of inclusive language, ritual and traditions. Whilst this should be applauded however, there was one piece of the puzzle which was missing and that was gender inclusiveness and sensitivity.

Currently throughout the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) there is a clear liturgy being followed, sometimes even prepared for a particular event for example synods, conferences and inductions. This makes it easy for all members to follow the service and anticipate what is coming next. This further creates uniformity on the church liturgical worship and no unexpected twists and turns.

#### **4.5 The Methodist Church liturgy in Southern Africa**

The challenge for the Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) is still that of looking at Sunday services as either English/ Afrikaans or the vernacular. It seems to me after speaking to some of the active and retired ministers within the MCSA that no clear thought had been given to what the church of the future will look like. More so, how does the church adapt to the current changes and movements within South African society. According to Mostert (2018:123), “Many Christians from other countries in Africa find that the English language and culture of formerly white congregations is a more congenial place than the more culturally inflexible Xhosa and coloured congregations.” Mostert (2018:124) further suggest that this sense of welcome is a superficial one, “aside from some token inclusion of worship songs in other languages, the “base” language and culture appear to be still unchanged.” According Fenwick and Spinks (1995:91) the British Methodist Church reviewed the Methodist Service Book and this was accepted by the church and it’s the one currently used by the MCSA English services.

The church in its attempt to be inclusive must ask itself the following question, what is the new liturgy that will accommodate the various groups within the church? How does the church make everyone feel welcome and can associate themselves with the liturgy? Who must lead the liturgical changes of the church in transition?

All these questions are central to the MCSA's ability to respond to the challenge of having an inclusive worship service that will make everyone feel at home and welcome. The MCSA has a committee that is specifically responsible for this work and is called Doctrine, Ethics and Worship Committee (DEWCOM) that over the years was tasked to revise liturgical and worship materials.

According to the MCSA Year Book (2014:216) a liturgy Sub-committee of the DEWCOM was mandated to develop liturgical material for the MCSA and this was after the realisation of the slow movement in development in this area. The following year the sub-committee reported the progress with the establishment of the Ndzilo website that will be a hub which Methodists can access for liturgical and worship materials. This would also allow contributors to load new liturgical work or material. This website according to the MCSA Year Book (2015:223) states, "we hope to get to a point where, if one requires a liturgy for a particular service or event, one can easily be able to access material approved by the MCSA." There was also a realisation that this work will take some time to be fully embedded. The launch of the website on liturgy was viewed by the church as a major breakthrough that would make it easy for the church to have a common hub that everyone/liturgists can access. All the liturgical and worship documents are to be vetted by the MCSA before they are loaded on the hub. However, after this great work that was reported the previous year, MCSA Year Book (2016:254) reflects a setback in what was viewed as a ground breaking work on liturgy and worship, that "activity on the site has been slow and the use of it was disappointing." The liturgy sub-committee suggested that more communication was needed on the availability of this resource amongst the church membership.

DEWCOM in their report (2018:296) further states that, "Members of the liturgical committee have produced various liturgies on request from time to time. The challenge has arisen in terms of publishing that liturgical material. DEWCOM appeals to the Communications Unit, through Conference, to investigate the possibility of amalgamating and hosting the Ndzilo Website as well as the DEWCOM BlogSpot in order to facilitate a better means through which information could be accessible to the wider church." This was yet another setback as the great work done on the hub it seems was being undone.

It is not surprising therefore that there is no liturgy for multicultural Sunday services and this was confirmed when I had informal conversations with both active and retired ministers of MCSA on the matter. It was to my surprise that the church that Professor Smangaliso Kumalo describes as a church with the white past and a black future has fully thought about a service

that is all embracing to both blacks and whites. According to Letšosa (2008:96) liturgy should be seen as an act that unifies, “people from different local cultures can share the same things or behave according to the same pattern with regards to certain liturgical issues such as praying with lifted hands, clapping hands when signing, or kneeling when praying.” This then becomes a worship service that is accommodative to everyone without anyone feeling excluded in the encounter with God. I must once again state that the church does have a liturgy that is blended for special occasions and this was acknowledged in the (2018:296) DEWCOM report.

Sifo (2018:6) states that worship should be a smooth and logical process that should be prepared ahead of time and not as a second thought. Further, Basden (1999:42) suggests that “the mood of liturgical service reflects a balance of contemplation and majesty. The service is well planned and completely structured.” According to Sifo (2018:6) the worship service must have a beginning, middle and end clearly structured. Westerfield-Tucker (2012:153) further suggests the church should adopt a simpler liturgy that can be easily replicated and copied across various communities. The MCSA has been looking at having a more up to date liturgical and worship materials easily accessible and available to liturgists, this has been a complex and complicated process. According to the sub-committee (2016:254) whilst there is a clear need to revise the current liturgical materials, there’s also a challenge around the vernacular services. The sub-committee states that (2016:254), “our liturgy committee recognises the need to revise some of our very dated vernacular liturgies. Yet we realise that such revisions will be difficult to introduce in some of our communities where the early liturgies have become sacrosanct.” Thus, it is important that the church have a more structured texted liturgical worship blue print that serves as a guide for liturgist to follow. Westerfield-Tucker (2012:153) suggests that texted liturgical resources are not easily adopted without resistance but over time they became common practice. Therefore, the fear for resistance by liturgy sub-committee are not reason enough that the review process should be held in abeyance without resolution. Change will always bring about resistance at the beginning, however Salerno and Brock (2008:2) state, ‘change is life, life is change’.

According Fenwick and Spinks (1995:92) texted liturgy is only a guideline for Methodist liturgists to follow and not a cast on stone affair that cannot be changed or amended. However, the flexibility in the Methodist liturgy does allow creativity during worship such as free prayer instead of prayers written the church hymnal. Sifo (2018:2) cites the MCSA document “Your ministry as a worship leader” of 1996 states that a structured liturgy “is a way of trying to ensure that over a period of time the congregation is helped to respond adequately to ‘as much

of God' as possible. The same basic form week after week – be it a set of traditions liturgy or an expression of so-called 'free worship'."

According to Long (2001:46) Christian worship has to flow well to eliminate any drama and this is possible when the order of worship is strong and is logically structured. Further, Long (2001:47) states that even the congregation that are said not follow structured liturgy or are spontaneous, are following a certain structure though claiming the opposite. Easily accessible liturgical and worship material is central to the preservation of the church traditions and doctrinal teaching. Also, there's a common understanding of how things are done and consistency in application. I must hasten to say the MCSA may have a beautiful website but without easy access and content it is not worth its salt.

From the current actions it seems the MCSA has left things to each individual congregation to see how they can best address the changes that are happening.

#### **4.6 Pretoria City Mission (PCM) Methodist Church**

The decline in the numbers at PCM created a dilemma for the church as this meant at one time there were three services that operated and two of them overlapping i.e. 07:30 vernacular and 09:00 English. As Letšosa (2008:88) further argues, once black people are in worship time is of no consequence and this resulted in the vernacular over staying more often. The integration of the two services called for a relook at the pure English and vernacular services; thus it was agreed to a multi-lingual service that will accommodate congregants from the two services. The service was to take liturgical elements from the two services and blend them into one.

The first thing that this meant was that the service was going to be longer and IsiXhosa and SeSotho hymns were to be sung. This is what Letšosa (2008:96) points to when he refers to liturgy being trans-cultural, which implies to its ability to be adopted irrespective of the person's background. Thus Letšosa (2008:96) further argues that, "the environment and setting in which the local church lives combine to act as the context the sheds light on its theology, sacramental life and missionary activity." At PCM a compromise was reached that the preaching of the word would be in English to accommodate all congregants. Whilst this sounded innovative yet not everyone was satisfied with the proposed solution. Not long after the implementation of the new order of service/ liturgy the white congregants migrated to the

nearby English only churches around Tshwane. Which was a clear show of dissatisfaction with the new order of worship as it brought in two elements (*Te Deum* and the Apostles Creed) that are central to the traditional vernacular worship service

#### **4.6.1 What's on-going?**

Whilst the multi-lingual service still continues at PCM as per the agreement in 2012. However, there is a need for the church leadership and congregants to decide whether the intended outcomes were achieved or not. If not, why? and if yes, at what price for the church as a whole. The current church membership is mainly IsiXhosa or SeSotho speakers and therefore is the agreement that was reached with the white congregants still valid or not. I want to believe the arrangement is still valid as there are other people from the rest of the continent that are looking for a Methodist home in the city. To them the multi-lingual service will still be relevant and is also an opportunity to enculturate themselves with the local languages whilst living in South Africa. In the age of hi-tech and technology there's no need even to own a hymnal as all the hymns are projected on the screen for everyone to see.

The major issue that remains in my view, is the lack of uniformity in the liturgical worship service in the multi-lingual services. As a result, almost every liturgist at PCM has her or his texted liturgy in accordance to her or his liking. It follows as Letšosa (2008:89) asserts that "liturgy should be viewed as a complex rituals and symbols. It has to do with the meaning participants grant to the ritual and the manner in which they deal with it." It is the same reason as Letšosa (2008:89) continues to argue, "when liturgy is approached from its rituality, its context becomes respected because people, whether the community or individual, give shape to the ritual." Similarly, De Klerk (2013:1) argues, "worship service is also a public service, directed at the world in which worshippers live." Therefore, the liturgic ritual should be identifiable with the congregation otherwise it can be viewed as alien to them.

As for the PCM congregation, there is a greater need for all liturgists to understand the role the liturgical worship practice in the Methodist tradition plays in the identity of a Methodist.

## 4.7 Conclusion

Liturgy is central to people's encounter with God and therefore should be inclusive to all who worship God. Everyone must be able to see themselves or be able to identify with the rituals. According to Letšosa (2008:89) there is a great need for, "Indigenisation and Africanisation as well as inculturation of the liturgy." However, Barnard et al (2014:13) further expands above by suggesting that liturgical ritual has to be characterised as dynamic or fluid or unstable in order to adapt with modern dictates.

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) is very flexible in its approach however there are fundamentals that cannot be missing in any liturgical worship i.e. hymns, prayer, scripture reading and preaching. All these are the corner stone of Methodist worship; however, prayer can follow pre-set prayers or free prayer. Sifo (2018:2) further citing MCSA book '*Your ministry as a worship leader*' (1996:13) states if a service has no structured liturgy then it has no liturgy and limits or lacks the involvement of the congregation.

Liturgical worship in Pretoria City Mission (PCM) also has these elements that are standard but the lack of structure can leave many congregants confused regarding what is going to happen next. The need for a more structured way that will ensure that the traditional rituals that are expected in a Methodist service are followed and everyone is able to encounter God during the service. It is important that PCM should recognise the opportunity at hand to adopt something new without losing her identity as a Methodist Church that is in transition but also true to her traditions and ritual

Summarily, Saliers (1994:104) suggests that, "liturgy carries us across and prepares us for what eye hath not seen, nor ear heard yet which, Scripture says has been prepared for those who love God."

The need for creativity for a set liturgy by the church is important to keep the congregants engaged so that it is not too much ritualistic and no longer effective. At the same time, creativity should not lead to confusion and loss of identity both doctrinally and church traditional identity. Lartey (2013:xvii) suggests that a new way of worship must be found that is welcoming to all the congregants and for everyone to understand the liturgy is constantly in a state of change and fluidity. Therefore, it may not be exactly what was done previously but calls for constant dialogue. As communities in South Africa are changing from historical segregated ones into more integrated communities the church in general is challenged to adjust accordingly to make sure that it reflects the new community. Doing away with the separate worship for more equal

integrated services that are currently being developed to become an all embracing church, being one body of Christ. According to Farhadian (2007:5) the church must note that, “the relationship between Christianity and culture is such an important one that assemblies worldwide are compelled to grapple with how their worship challenges, adopts both local and distant cultural elements.”

## **Chapter 5: Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion**

### **5.1 Introduction**

In this chapter I want to remind the reader of the question that I have been looking at “To determine how liturgy can be a vehicle towards an inclusive and welcoming worship at Pretoria City Mission?”. In my attempt to answer the above core question, I used the following three questions;

- What is liturgy and its role during worship?
- How can liturgy make strangers feel welcome?
- What does the liturgy of the future look like?

In answering the above research questions, I have solicited the Osmer (2008:4) methodology based on the following questions;

- What’s going on?
- Why is this going on?
- What ought to be going on?
- How might we respond?

This final chapter will focus on the following two questions from Osmer (2008:4) i.e. What ought to be going on? and How might we respond? In my attempt to answer the two questions I will give what could be the potential answer to the relevance of liturgy in a society that is in transition and also what the future may look like. It is my conviction that the changes in the demographics in South African communities will continue and the future congregants will have little attachment to language difference and culture but will want a service that speaks to their prevailing material conditions and identity. Liturgy has to change since culture is becoming more globalised therefore so will the way people worship.

## **5.2 Summary**

### **5.2.1 Chapter 1**

In this chapter the focus was on the background of the liturgical challenge that is facing the Methodist Church of Southern Africa Pretoria City Mission congregation. The research question came about because of integrating the English service and a vernacular service to form one service – multi-lingual service. Though this service was meant to be a multi-lingual service however it seemed more to be about the inclusion of the *Te Deum* (*Siyakudumisa Thixo*), Apostles Creed and few hymns. In the main the service was an English service including the reading of the word and preaching. The integration was so poor that it favoured largely the English members. The liturgical challenge led to the former English service congregants leaving the church to join all English Methodist Church congregations around Tshwane. In my attempt to resolve the research question, I followed Osmer (2008:4) methodology by asking the following questions; What’s going on? Why is this going on? What ought to be going on? and How might we respond? The four questions were the basis of the research.

The methodology used was literature study based and no contact with people except where informal conversations took place. This was because this mini-dissertation which forms part of a MPhil is course work based. The chapter later took a view on liturgic worship.

### **5.2.2 Chapter 2**

In chapter 2 I focused more on what liturgy is and what role it plays in the life of the church and congregation. Liturgy is according to Pecklers (2012:7), the service both to God and his people. This was also seen as a structured text and ritual that congregation’s practise during worship and these become part of the church’s DNA and identity. I further recognised that liturgy in some instances is not written down, however it is a pattern of events that are followed by the particular church or congregation during worship. Further, liturgy was identified as dynamic, and cannot be reduced to ancient prayers that are in prayer books. For instance, in the Methodist Church, whilst there are written prayers in the Methodist Hymnal free prayers are also part of the liturgy. Liturgy has to be embracing of other cultures that are not western. Similarly, liturgy must be simple and easily adaptable and replicated from one community to the next. In doing so also adopt the community’s way of life and rituals that are not in direct contradiction with Christian worship.

Liturgy also carries the dogmatics of the church and therefore has a direct impact on the theology of the church positively or negatively and *vice versa*. Therefore, it is important that the liturgist takes note of this relationship otherwise they may down play its significance.

### 5.2.3 Chapter 3

In this chapter we dealt with the topic on hospitality, the main focus was on how liturgical worship can make strangers welcome and part of the body of Christ. People who attend church services according to Long (2001:28) are not there only to encounter God but also to make acquaintances or friendships as well seek acceptance. Some people attend church to be in a space where everyone knows their names saying, “sometimes you want to go where everyone know names”. I further identified the class system within the Methodist Church as one of the ways that the church can make people feel welcome. However, its weakness is that its only applicable to those that are either part of the church or coming from within the church. It excludes those who are not members/strangers and do not wish to be a member. In that case hospitality to strangers falls short. However, the Methodist Church has tried to accommodate people that attend the church services regularly but are not full members of the church in the category called Adherents. In this way they feel that they belong and are welcome to worship in the Methodist Church.

I also recognised the importance of hospitality as it is embedded in the African philosophy of *Ubuntu* that ‘*umntu ngumntu ngabantu*’ (a person is a person through other people), which illustrates that no person can exist on his or her own. Christian hospitality towards a stranger is to ensure that a person feels welcome, this must be a deliberate act from other people to show kindness, courtesy and friendliness.

It is Newlands & Smith (2010:4) who suggest, “Hospitality is a hard test which we will regularly fail. But at least we can try to keep the aspiration before us.” Therefore, what we do wrong today should give us the impetus to work even harder to achieve a better and more hospitable experience for the less fortunate. I want to suggest that hospitality is not an end but a journey of humanity that seeks to know each other better. Also, being hospitable to one another gives us an opportunity to find ourselves through other people, and also see the revelation of God in them or through them. Thus, the church must enculturate the *Ubuntu* philosophy in their hospitality so that everyone can understand Christian hospitality from their

cultural background and ritual. Vosloo (2202:70) concludes that hospitality requires both institutional and structural transformation otherwise it will be superficial.

#### **5.2.4 Chapter 4**

In this chapter I deal centrally with liturgical development and how it has been influenced by the various exogenous factors. In South Africa I have noted how liturgy was influenced by colonialism since the church was introduced by western nations. Second the development of the Methodist liturgy was worldwide and in South Africa. I further focused on the role of inculturation of liturgy and that it be localised so that locals can identify with it. I have noted that liturgy as being central to people's encounter with God and therefore should be inclusive to all who worship God. Everyone must be able to see themselves or be able to identify with the rituals. According to Letšosa (2008:89) there is a great need to, "Indigenisation and Africanisation as well as inculturation of the liturgy."

The Methodist Church of Southern Africa (MCSA) is very flexible in its approach however there are fundamentals that cannot be missing in any liturgical worship i.e. hymns, prayer, scripture reading and preaching. All these are the corner stone of Methodist worship; however, prayer can follow written down prayers or free prayer. Sifo (2018:2) states if a service has no structured liturgy then it has no liturgy and limits or lacks the involvement of the congregation.

Liturgical worship in Pretoria City Mission (PCM) also have these standard elements but with the lack of structure can leave many congregants confused to what is going to happen next. The need for a more structured way will ensure that the traditional rituals that are expected in a Methodist service are followed by everyone enabling them to encounter God during the service. It is important that PCM should recognise the opportunity at hand to adapt whilst not losing her identity as a Methodist Church that is in transition but also true to her traditions and ritual. Summarily, Saliers (1994:104) suggests that, "liturgy carries us across and prepares us for what the eye hath not seen, nor ear heard yet which, Scripture says has been prepared for those who love God."

According to Long (2001:1) there are huge changes that have taken place already and these changes impact almost everything. Long (2001:1) further states that "worship has already undergone a sea change, almost everything has a new look and fresh sound of music, the language, the mood, the style of sermons." Included in the changes are part of how the church relates to culture.

### **5.3 What ought to be going on?**

In my attempt to answer the question above I will cite Long (2001:2) as he suggests that “no real change comes easily, but changes are especially explosive when they have to do with congregational worship”. Which implies that as in PCM the liturgical changes that happened in the multi-lingual service was not easy for some of the congregants hence they left. However, this does not mean that change must be halted in fear, otherwise nothing will ever happen. Because liturgy is dynamic and is constantly changing it is to be expected that change will come. It is for the reason that Long (2001:3) further argues that even the liturgy that today is viewed or seen as traditional was once new or seen as being innovative. Thus, the argument that culture is ever evolving, dynamic and not static, in the same manner liturgy is fluid and dynamic. Therefore, our human understanding of God is also ever changing. Liturgy then can be defined to be in a state of restlessness and ever changing, and the church should always be aware of the societal developments and adjust accordingly to remain relevant. If it fails to do so, it will find itself out dated and not responding to the needs of the congregants, therefore obsolete and irrelevant.

In the South African context, liturgy must be all embracing by finding space to include the rituals of those communities that were previously seen as in the periphery. This will not only assist in reconciliation but also give a sense of inclusion and being part-takers not spectators. The Methodist on its part has tried to do find space for everyone on the table through the DEWCOM sub-committee on Liturgy, however not much has been achieved. I want to suggest a deeper study on liturgical worship in the MCSA that will also look at a texted liturgy for all blended services in the MCSA Connexion.

### **5.4 How might we respond?**

The gap between societal development and that of the church are clearly outlined in the responses that I got from the active and retired ministers in my informal conversation with them on liturgy for blended/ multi-lingual services or congregations. I want to suggest that the response to the research question has to be for the whole MCSA Connexion as PCM might not be the only blended congregation. As mentioned in the previous chapters that encapsulated in liturgy is the church doctrine and history, therefore the liturgy sub-committee must look at

developing an official liturgy that will serve as the guideline to all liturgists to follow. This liturgy must include all the elements that define Methodist liturgical worship i.e. sing, prayer, scripture reading and preaching of the word.

According to Long (2001:1) worship has transformed greatly in the past and still does today, thus everything from the language, music, hospitality and preaching styles is new and refreshed. The music has moved from the use of organs to church choirs and bands. It's more a participatory style where everyone is allowed to sing without organ accompaniment. Mostert (2018:358) states the difference in the music cadence of the black and white communities as something that is so apparent in the Methodist Church. According Mostert (2018:358) this was not unique to the IsiXhosa speaking congregants but the same was observed with the Shona speaking congregants. It is in the blending of the two heritages that seems at the opposite end of each other that a joyful worship experience can still be celebrated. According to Saliers (1994:27) "liturgy is a common art of the people of God in which the community brings the depth of emotion of our lives to the ethos of God. In these acts we discover who we are, but also primarily, we discover who God is in this art." The coming together from different backgrounds gives us personal enrichment and a knowledge of God in our lives.

**Figure 1: Blending process**

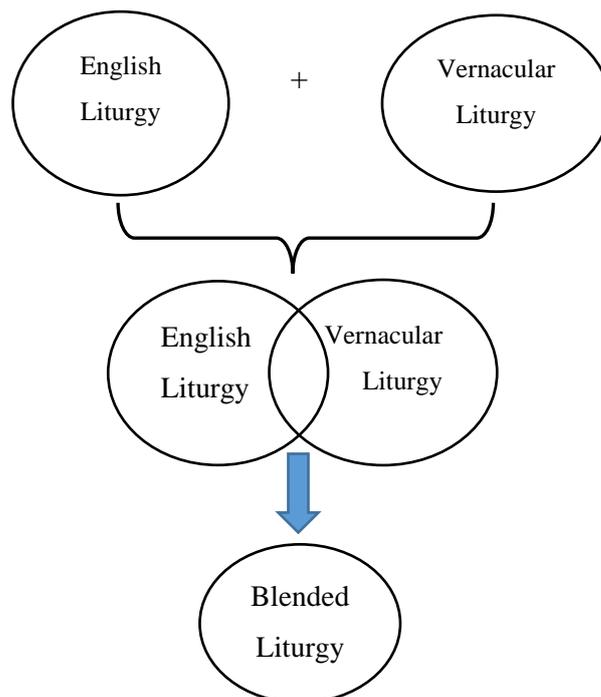
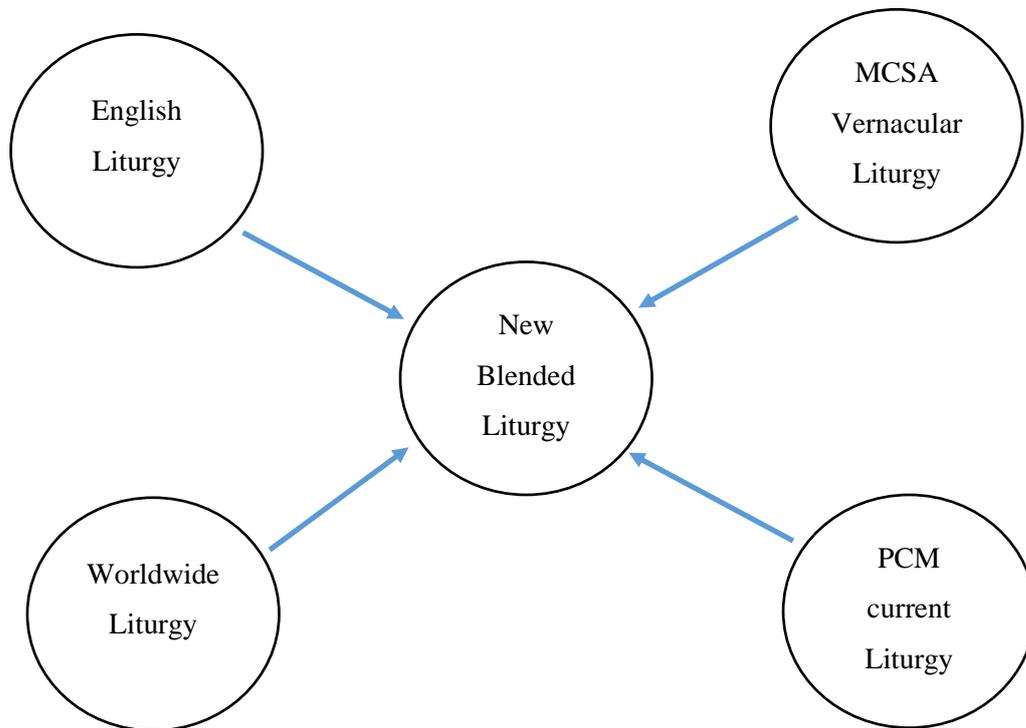


Figure 1 is a sketch that demonstrates the process that has to take place, the first level is where these two are separate services (English and vernacular), the intersection of the two services create the blended service in the middle, initially the common area is small and there are more differences than commonalities. As time goes the two groups tend to find more common areas and understanding (worshipping together, teaching, preaching etc.), thus the middle part grows bigger whilst the two old liturgical rituals are slowly disappearing. This is a journey that congregants will have to walk hand in hand with each other. The final stage is the new liturgical worship that is acceptable to everyone, new rituals and liturgical worship. What is also clear is that the change in liturgy will have its casualties but at the same time new people will find their identity in the new liturgy. The new liturgy must be inclusive of both English and vernacular, without alienating the other or one feeling left out. It must be hospitable to all congregants and everyone must feel welcome in the service. Further be able to encounter God.

**Figure 2: Influences to the new liturgy**



The figure 2 above is a sketch of the different influences into the new blended liturgy for Pretoria City Mission. The new liturgical worship cannot be an alien process rather should be informed by all the above elements. The church that worships God in an inclusive liturgical

style and embracing all its congregants. Thus Long (2001:9) states that, “most churches are somewhere in the mixed and muddled middle, trying to sort out what their conflicts over worship means.” If church cannot resolve these contradictions that arise as a result of the various influences and change Long (2001:9) further argues that such congregations or churches may not exist in the future because they insist on doing what their congregants do not want to listen, to hear or sing. This is true for worship in blended services in the Methodist Church, the church through a Conference resolution or church leadership structure needs to develop a liturgy that will be adaptable to blended services. In so doing giving the church stamp of approval on what the liturgists are expected to follow at a basic level. This will not only help the liturgist but also the congregants as they will be able to anticipate what the liturgist will do next and be engaged throughout the service.

According to Sifo (2018:4) citing Turnbull lists the following liturgical elements as essential for an effective worship i.e. Music, Prayer, Lesson, Sermon, The Notices, The Offering and Benediction.

## **5.5 Pretoria City Mission Liturgy**

According to White (1981:134) the Methodist Church morning service focuses on the following four liturgical elements “singing, prayer, the reading of a chapter out of the Old Testament and another out of the New Testament and preaching.” The Eucharist liturgy is added when it’s the service for the Lord’s Supper. It is important that in our attempt to revise the current liturgy that we do forget the fundamentals of the Methodist tradition.

### **5.5.1 Current Liturgy**

Unlike in 2012, today’s multi-lingual service is totally different both in terms of the worshippers and liturgy. In fact, anyone who was part of the original service would not be able to recognise the service. What still remains though is the preaching that is still in English and that is sometimes forgotten. The current service can easily have only vernacular hymns in total disregard of congregants who cannot speak South African vernacular languages. The lack of a standard liturgy signed off by the Conference makes everything to be trial and error as every liturgist follows what she or he is comfortable with. This lack of standard texted liturgy makes it even difficult for congregants to anticipate what will be next. I want to suggest that this might

have been one of the reasons this service may have lost members especially the white section of the congregation. This implies that the service has become more and more a duplication of a vernacular service even though it is meant to be a blended service that will be accommodative of all irrespective of background and be carried out beyond just saying it but through active demonstration.

### **5.5.2 Future Liturgy**

The future of this service can only be based on the principle of openness and being welcoming for everyone. For this to happen, there should be clear guidelines on who it is meant to cater for. Unless the target group is clearly defined there will continue be dominant groups who will come and take over and undermine those that are in the minority. I am convinced that the future of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa in the Pretoria inner city is dependent on blended or multi-lingual services. With more urban black children having problems in expressing themselves in their mother tongue a service of this nature will make them feel much at home. Unlike their parents these kids do not have an attachment to IsiXhosa, SeSotho or Setswana etc. Whilst a revised liturgy will accommodate these kids as I have mentioned but the service will be a home to other Methodist both globally and other African countries beyond MCSA Connexion. Its uniqueness will embrace both the elements from both the English and vernacular in a balanced way. According to White (1981:144) liturgy will evolve over time and the changes do not necessarily change its function as it plays a crucial role in helping the church to hope and remember.

### **5.6 Limitation**

One of the limitations with this study was the lack of data from the congregants on how they feel about the changes that happened in this service. However, that information is not available this being a mini-dissertation and not full research in which an empirical study would have been included. This was going to tell us whether this an issue with the worshipper or it is just my own sensitivity. The lack of formal engagement with the minister and the liturgists on what their feelings were about the service and whether they have any suggestions on how to improve their engagement when they are leading the services. Finally, the lack of formal interaction with the DEWCOM sub-committee of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa has also left a gap in the study as no formal position could be solicited.

## **5.7 Future Studies**

There a number of points that were unearthed during my research that I could not delve on them because this being a mini dissertation. Below are some the questions that I think would need further thought and study;

- Blended service liturgy for the Methodist Church i.e. similar background traditional and contemporary and different communities – how can this process be done seamlessly
- Aligning liturgy with the changing societal changes both in language and culture – black children growing up in urban communities
- The role of liturgy in preparing the congregation for the delivery of the Word
- What is the role of liturgy in welcoming strangers e.g. non-South African citizens
- The role of hospitality theology in liturgical worship

## **5.8 Conclusion**

It is my observation that there seems to be a gap between the South African societal changes to where the MCSA is in its thinking regarding liturgy and worship, though this may require a more in-depth study than this one. Similarly, Mostert (2018:124) argues that whilst ministers within the Methodist Church are aware of the diversity within the urban congregations, however they don't seem to think much about it. Thus, the same can be said about the MCSA in general. The church should be taking a leading role in the integration agenda in South Africa and not be a follower. Changes in population patterns in Tshwane and the whole of South Africa are calling for a rethink of racial segregated churches. According to Farhadien (2007:5) "The relationship between Christianity and culture is such an important one that assemblies worldwide are compelled to grapple with how their worship challenges, adapts, and adopts both local and distant cultural elements." Hence it is important that congregations need to reflect the societal changes, where every congregant can feel welcomed.

There is a greater need for congregations to be more open to changes in their liturgical worship and not see it as an attack to their identity. Today's tradition as previously mentioned was once an innovation from those that introduced it.

First, for this to happen there needs to be open conversation and a shared vision by both the church leaders and congregants regarding what this means and what the intentions are.

Otherwise the whole exercise would fall flat like the previous endeavour to modernise vernacular liturgy.

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